

Polish Liberal Thought before 1918

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by

MACIEJ JANOWSKI



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Introduction

The aim of the present study is to trace the specific features of liberal ideology on the European periphery. The very existence of this peripheral liberalism has been frequently denied. Liberalism, it has been said, is a fruit of capitalist development, commercial spirit and a strong third estate. Wherever any of these three were lacking, no liberalism was possible. This reasoning is as simple as it is false; intellectual history does enjoy a certain autonomy and the intellectual transfers in Central and Eastern Europe were, as a rule, much more successful than those of political or economic institutions. It was more than 100 years ago that an eminent Polish sociologist, Ludwik Krzywicki, coined the useful concept of “migrant ideas” (*idee wędrowne*). He meant ideas which, being born in a certain region, “migrate” into regions with different social structure and intellectual tradition; in their new setting they slowly transform the local conditions, at the same time being subject to transformation themselves.

It should be stressed that “migrant” does not mean “artificial” or “superficial,” let alone “unimportant.” Polish liberalism, like its Czech, Hungarian, or Russian counterparts, had to adapt and transform itself, but so had any other idea in the human history that ever influenced people outside of the region of its birth. Forestalling the further narrative, let us stress one important feature of this liberalism on periphery: the tendency to modernize and democratize through state institutions. We may say that the etatist (or “Hobbesian”) aspect of classical liberalism is strengthened in proportion to the movement of the idea further to the European East.

Attempting a clear definition of liberalism does not seem to be of much use here. The term itself had to cover so many and so various ideologies through the last 200 years that its usefulness without any qualifying adjectives may be put into doubt. “Liberalism” as such is, most probably, an empty term; what exists, is a variety of liberalisms of different times and

places, and I would like to trace some features of one of them. Even the definition of this spatially and temporarily limited species of liberalism, however, cannot be undertaken on these introductory pages. In a sense, the whole book itself is an extended definition, and if any attempts at a short formula are possible at all, then its proper place is the Conclusion, after the reader has become familiar with the presented facts.

While constructing the corpus of persons and political groupings to be included into my analysis, I decided to include all those labeled by contemporaries or historians “liberal,” and then—in order to obtain a picture of an unbroken evolution—I added any person or group whose ideas bear certain similarities to former ones, no matter whether they themselves, their contemporaries or later historians ever considered them liberals. The internal coherence of the obtained picture as well as the presentation of a continuous intellectual evolution seemed to me so important that in order to accomplish this task I did not hesitate to soften the criteria for choosing the heroes of the present book. What I propose to write is a history of liberalism, not of liberals; there is nothing improper in including into my narrative a person or group positively disclaiming liberalism if some element of their thought seems to fit the constructed whole. In other words, the aim of the book is not to present a collection of essays on ideas of a certain number of people that could be labeled Polish liberals, but to present an internally coherent portrait of a doctrine—even if there never was a person that would profess the doctrine as a whole and if the final picture had to be “composed” out of fragments of existing ideas of existing (but not necessarily liberal) thinkers.

Such procedure may, I believe, be not without interest for those concerned with liberal thought; it may perhaps help to disclose some potentialities dormant in the “classical” version of liberalism, but actualized only on the peripheries. My main target audience, however, are those interested in the intellectual history of Poland and Central and Eastern Europe at large: apart from turning their attention to a relatively lesser known side of Polish thought, I would like to provide some material for a possible comparative treatment of Central and Eastern European liberalism as a historical phenomenon. It is for the readers to judge whether these aims are fulfilled.

Although some basic knowledge of nineteenth-century Polish history would probably make the reading easier, I have tried to be realistic and not require too much from foreign readers. Polish intellectual history always developed within the framework of Western ideas and any reader roughly

acquainted with intellectual debates in Britain, France or Germany will find many familiar subjects and phrases, if usually (as noticed earlier) modified and put into a different context. Lack of knowledge of persons or details encountered in the book should therefore not make it impossible to follow the main argument, i.e. a reconstruction of certain ideas.

Monographs of Polish liberalism, while not entirely sufficient, are by no means non-existent; some works that served me as guiding lights should be mentioned here (full bibliographical data are given in the Bibliography at the end of the volume). More than 100 years ago an eminent literary historian, Piotr Chmielowski, published a booklet entitled, characteristically, *Liberalism and Obscurantism in Lithuania and Ruthenia, 1815–1821*; it dealt with the literary life in the lands of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania in a period following the Congress of Vienna and understood liberalism as a term almost equal to “Enlightenment.” A generation later Helena Więckowska published a still valuable monograph on the liberal fraction in the Diet of the Polish Kingdom after 1815. After the second world war the history of liberal thought was for a long time neglected, but some pertinent materials are to be found in numerous books on the history of social and political ideas and movements in Poland. I would like to mention the study by Ryszarda Czepulis-Rastenis on the social and political ideas of the nobility grouped around Count Andrzej Zamoyski in the mid-nineteenth century, as well as two volumes by Stefan Kieniewicz: one dealing with the moderate camp in Russian Poland on the eve of the 1863 insurrection (*Between Compromise and Revolution*), another, with a wider range, dealing with the varieties of the so-called “organic work” movement in Poland through the nineteenth century (*Drama of the Sober Enthusiasts*).

A new wave in the researches of the history of Polish liberal thought started in the late 1970s and has lasted until now. In 1978 Jerzy Jedlicki, in an essay entitled *A Fettered Liberalism*, convincingly argued that the so called Polish positivist movement (active in Russian Poland in the second half of the nineteenth century) is best understood within the framework of European liberal thought.

Rett Ryszard Ludwikowski published in 1982 a history of *Main Currents of Polish Political Thought*; the great asset of this book was the attempt to interpret Polish thought through the prism of Western European categories; thus, the author characterizes Polish conservatism, liberalism, socialism, etc. This attitude differed from the traditional one that tended to distinguish the threads within Polish political thought according to their atti-

tude towards independent Polish statehood (thus discerning, by and large, irredentists, and those favoring “conciliation” with the partitioning powers). Ludwikowski’s perspective seems promising because, even assuming a fundamental incompatibility between Polish and “Western” political thought, measuring the former by the standards of the latter seems the only possible way to ascertain this difference. The author, however, did not present a coherent picture of Polish liberalism as an intellectual formation, confining himself to some important individuals or groups.

In the 1980s Marcin Król turned the attention of the researchers to the history of Polish conservatism, and a volume of studies published in 1992 (and in German translation as *Liberale Traditionen in Polen*) did the same for the history of Polish liberalism. Tadeusz Stegner, Maria Brykalska, Barbara Petrozolin-Skowrońska, and Zbigniew Fras have widened our knowledge of nineteenth-century Polish liberalism by a series of detailed monographs. I would also like to mention the polemic of Nikodem Bończa-Tomaszewski with the Polish version of my book together with my lengthy answer in which I tried to clear some of my points.

Numerous works by Andrzej Walicki, while rarely dealing directly with Polish liberal thought, provided invaluable insights, and Jerzy Szacki’s *Liberalism after Communism* opened a wide field of possible comparisons between the nineteenth century and our own epoch.

The book that influenced me most, however, was Jerzy Jedlicki’s *The Suburb of Europe*. Analyzing Polish attitudes towards Western civilization, the author presented a panorama of various modernizing as well as anti-modernizing ideas, thus mapping the framework of nineteenth-century Polish debates on progress, modernity, the West, economy and the like. I followed his steps much more often than it was possible to show in the footnotes.

A note on the usage of geographical names may not be out of place here. Given the lack of widely accepted English language equivalents (with the exception of Cracow and Warsaw), any decision to choose one or another of numerous national forms runs the risk of being understood as an ideological choice. The “mechanical” solution of using place-names in their present linguistic form (e.g. Lviv instead of Lwów) seems most sensible when the subject is interethnic relations or a history of a multiethnic society. When, however, the subject is confined to the history of only one nationality, the usage of present-day forms seemed to me somewhat anachronistic. After long hesitation, I decided to retain the Polish forms of Lwów and Wilno, instead of the Ukrainian Lviv or Lithuanian Vilnius, as these cities

interest me only on account of their role in nineteenth-century Polish culture. It is not to be understood as an attempt to diminish the impact of other ethnic groups on the history of the cities in question, nor of course as any sort of territorial imperialism.

Needless to say, a book covering more than a century cannot aim at exhausting the source material. I relied mainly on press and journalism, confining myself (with one exception) to printed matters, but trying to reach at least some texts that hitherto escaped the attention of the historians. It is not on finding unknown facts, however, but on re-interpreting some threads of nineteenth-century intellectual history that I focused my interest.

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The original Polish version was prepared at my home institute, the Institute of History, Polish Academy of Sciences (Warsaw) and partially discussed at the seminar meetings there. The Polish manuscript was read in whole or in parts by Maciej Górny, Jerzy Jedlicki, Leszek Koczanowicz, Magdalena Micińska, Maciej Mycielski and Wiktoria Śliwowska. Without their helpful comments the present work would not be the same. I had the opportunity to discuss some of the controversies regarding the very concept of Polish liberalism with Professor Tomasz Kizwalter. My wife Beata heroically endured the years of my preoccupation with Polish liberalism.

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some influence of his opinions and advice is felt in the present text, it would be for me a matter of great satisfaction.

Whatever merits my book may have, they are to a high degree a result of the help of the above-mentioned friends and colleagues. All faults are exclusively my own.

CHAPTER 1

Two Sources of Liberal Thought

I

European liberalism drew its ideas from two sources: the late-medieval tradition of estate liberties and the theory and practice of early modern absolutism.

It is impossible to overrate the importance of the estate system for the development of the modern idea of freedom. It was in the Middle Ages that the actual concept of a legal system came into being, and the methods of interpreting the laws and the idea of the rule of law were developed. All these principles, first worked out in the 11th and 12th centuries in the process of building the canon law, were to be used by secular legislators in centuries to come.¹

Freedom in the Middle Ages, however, had a local character not a universal one; it was a privilege granted to an individual or a group by the free will (at least in theory) of the monarch or suzerain. The word “liberty” generally appeared in the plural; “rights and liberties” of a town, province or estate had their material shape, they were written down on parchment certified with seals and carefully stored in chests. Rights and obligations of any individual were derived from them taking part in a given community; there was therefore no place for the abstract idea of “human rights” affecting everybody by the mere nature of things. It was European absolutism that provided the preconditions for the emergence of this idea. While breaking with medieval “liberties,” limiting the dominance of the nobility, the municipal self-government, the autonomy of provinces and the independent status of the Church, it slowly homogenized the colorful patchwork of legal systems, institutions, mutual dependencies and rivaling systems of authority, striving to plant in their stead the germs of a modern state with a uniform administrative system, a bureaucracy subordinate to a monarch and a unitary legal system. Sovereignty, hitherto residing in the provinces, estates and other autonomous corporations, began to concen-

trate in the capital. Thus absolute monarchs, “blind tools in the hands of God,” to use a brilliant metaphor of Tocqueville, subconsciously acted towards the formation of modern democratic societies. Although this formation was not fully accomplished until the French Revolution, the local differences slowly faded. It was only as a result of this evolution that the previously absent concept of “citizen” could appear—a concept fundamental to liberal thought, joining under one name all people living in one state and subordinate to one law.

Thomas Hobbes’ *Leviathan* legitimized absolutism invoking not divine right of kings, but the natural right of an individual. Individuals in the state of nature, equal and free, yet living in constant fear of death from a heavier hand, willingly forfeit their political rights in favor of the monarchy in order to ensure themselves safety, to break away from the state of nature and to end the *bellum omnium contra omnes*.²

Thus, from individualistic, secular and rational assumptions, the reason was found for absolute authority. Liberalism and absolutism found common features not only in the sphere of practical politics (by warring with the estate system), but also, due to Hobbes, in the sphere of political theory. Aspirations of liberals for a strong state will always accompany their aspirations for the maximum freedom of the individual.

Only when absolutism had achieved the greater part of its leveling work, could theorists turn to the former, medieval traditional estate liberties and make use of them in the fight for the triumph of modern freedom based now not on privileges, but on the idea of universal citizenship. This was executed by Montesquieu in his great work *On the Spirit of Laws*, besides a score of less well-known authors. He saw the best guarantee of freedom in a political system where various state institutions keep each other in check, thus retaining a beneficial balance of power. Montesquieu accepted some of the anti-absolutistic ideals of the nobility and democratized them, joining them with the humanitarian ideas of the Enlightenment. He was a “right-wing oppositionist” who supplied fresh arguments to the “left-wing oppositionists”—that is how the role of Montesquieu was summed up, in a consciously adopted anachronic terminology, by an eminent specialist on eighteenth-century history.³

Polish liberalism, similarly to the Western one, drew from two sources, and the relative importance of each has been for the last 200 years a subject of prolonged debate among historians and publicists. The pattern, which emerged from reformers of the Enlightenment, saw in the noble political system of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth only anarchy and

the suppression of the non-noble populace, while linking the beginnings of freedom, based on rule of law, with the reforms of the times of Stanislas Augustus, such as the abolition of *liberum veto* or the reorganization of the administration. The second established pattern, popularized (but not discovered) in the romantic era by the historian Joachim Lelewel and his school, considered gentry democracy as the first stage of the development of modern liberty in Poland. Gentry democracy obviously had its faults and in the seventeenth century grew into an aristocratic oligarchy, it could have been, however, repaired if the partitions had not interrupted the natural process of evolution towards a modern liberal-democratic system. Both these patterns of thinking in different variations find followers to this day, a dispute between them being part of the history of Polish liberalism.

It is now worth considering whether the noble institutions of the Commonwealth could have become a support for liberal ideology and politics. To a certain degree it is obvious that they could since gentry democracy grew from the same stem as the Western European estate systems. Father Benedykt Chmielowski, an author of a popular compendium of knowledge called *Nowe Ateny* (New Athens) (1745), differentiated three basics of Polish freedom: firstly the noble equality, secondly the free election of kings, and thirdly the *liberum veto*.

The work of Chmielowski was unfairly regarded as a sign of late Baroque obscurantism—under the archaic vocabulary there are hidden many ideas regarding equality before the law, freedom of the individual, freedom of speech and government by consent. From the era of the blossoming of the gentry parliamentarism, namely the sixteenth and early seventeenth century, it would be possible to cite examples that sound even more modern.⁴

The “Anarchic doctrine of the gentry” (to use the expression of Emanuel Rostworowski)⁵ lasted up to the downfall of the Commonwealth. Seweryn Rzewuski, a conservative opponent of enlightened reforms and later an ardent supporter of Russia, in his pamphlets of which the best known is entitled *O sukcesji tronu w Polsce* (On the Succession to the Throne in Poland), drew an idealized picture of the Commonwealth in which maximum decentralization of authority and sovereignty would be realized. He was able to use modern argumentation: he praised the political system of the United States, he sympathized with the anti-monarchic opposition in France, with joy he greeted the convoking of the General Estates and the limitation of the king’s authority in France in the spring of 1789, as well as the pulling down of the Bastille—the hated symbol of regal despotism.

With great finesse and knowledge of the developments in Western Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries, he presented the possibility of the gradual suppression of freedom in Poland by hereditary monarchy striving for absolutism. "Every government seeks wider authority, every king seeks to have it unlimited. This is so natural to man [...] that there can be no doubt about it." It is difficult here not to be reminded of Lord Acton's famous saying that every power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Only when in Rzewuski's writing one comes across the fear that the hereditary king might wish to "make his subjects rebel" against the noble estate, which would lead to a situation where "his own subject" will "drag" a nobleman "to court," must one realize that the author is a feudal aristocrat and not a Victorian liberal. This social context does not, however, change the fact that Rzewuski's pamphlet contains many interesting ideas close to liberal thought; it demands a deeper analysis and certainly does not deserve the contemptuous label of "the primitivism of constitutional thought."⁶

Three elements of gentry democracy can be acknowledged as "protoliberal": first, the attachment to the idea of freedom, understood as the freedom of an individual, as also participation in political life; second, the idea of the rule of law; and third, the idea of the Commonwealth as a separate body from the ruler; this last concept is connected to the previous one since it does not allow the placing of the ruler beyond the law. However, the function of these ideas in the context of the whole political system of the Commonwealth was different from the function of analogical concepts in a modern state.

If then in the West—as we have seen—modern liberalism is derived from the tradition of the estates and from the politics of absolutism, in Poland the second of these two sources was lacking, whereas the first took on a specific form. In the West there developed the so-called estate dualism, in which the monarch shared his authority with the estates—the nobility, the towns and the clergy. In the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, meanwhile, the noble estate achieved a decided predominance both over the remaining estates and over the monarch himself. This specific estate system did not become restructured by absolutism; in effect the political system of the Commonwealth retained many archaic features which threw into doubt any point in looking for protoliberal elements in it.

Let us begin with the concept of sovereignty. In countries which, during the course of their history, developed a system of estate parliamentarism, such as Poland, Bohemia or Hungary, there developed the abstract concept

of “the crown” (in Poland replaced later by the concept of the Commonwealth) which indicates the setting apart of the state from the ruler. For comparison let us note that in the entangled political system of the Holy Roman Empire such a consciousness had not yet developed in the seventeenth century: the famous ruler of Brandenburg, the Great Elector Frederic William, could leave in his will a piece of land for each of his sons and also widow’s rights for his wife. He did not then clearly differentiate the state from his personal property,⁷ similarly to the medieval rulers. However, this confusion of ownership with political power, private laws with public did not prevent absolute monarchs from creating the foundations of a modern state, whilst the seemingly modern concept of the Commonwealth turned out to be a blind alley in the development of the state, similarly to the idea of the Empire in Germany: for it was in total agreement with the semi-federal character of the state in which sovereignty resides in individual local councils (if not into individual representatives of nobility). This phenomenon is described by some historians (B. Leśnodorski, Z. Wójcik) as the “decentralization of sovereignty.”

Let us note the basic difference between this decentralization of sovereignty and the modern principle of sovereignty of the people. In the latter, sovereignty is reposed in the people as a whole, and individuals can only participate in one, indivisible “general will”—whilst in the Commonwealth of the nobility, sovereignty was reposed in every local council (or even every nobleman). Social historians sometimes consider the Commonwealth as a “federation of neighborhoods” rather than a unitary state; this phenomenon may perhaps be treated as a social equivalent of the legal concept of the decentralization of sovereignty. In the ideological sphere we may find a counterpart in the vision of the past as a chronicle of individual noble families rather than of the country as a whole (although, the Baroque belief about the value of tribe and “blood” is clearly a much wider phenomenon).⁸

The Diet with binding instructions from the voters to the delegates, based on the principle of unanimity, was reminiscent of a congress of delegates of sovereign states rather than of a modern parliament. Its character was further strengthened by the shifting of the center of authority from parliament to local councils which was visible during the seventeenth century. The predominance of local councils over parliament was sealed by an institution called “appeal to the brethren” allowing the nobility in the local council to refuse agreement to the taxes passed by parliament.

Half a century ago Władysław Konopczyński noted the next difference

between the gentry democracy and modern democracy: “the idea of a government as something separate from legislation and jurisdiction [...] was something that the Poles found difficult to understand.” In the opinion of early modern Polish thinkers, in intervals between parliamentary sessions the king did not actually have anything to do apart from measuring out justice according to the binding laws.⁹ The need of a separate executive authority, which John Locke had so clearly emphasized in his *Two Treatises on Government*, was not considered at all: this would have meant the right to take decisions independently in situations prescribed by law.

What is more, the noble legislators believed that the function of parliament is not to proclaim new laws, but only to supervise the observation of the old ones. Political imagination was directed backwards, as in medieval utopias, not forwards, as in modern ideologies. Thus, the most mature movement of reform in the sixteenth century took on the label of the “execution” of the law, as though emphasizing that it aims only at the execution of the existing laws, not at the reform of the political system.

The natural consequence of the lack of the concept of a government and the feebleness of the central authority was the non-existence of modern bureaucracy. The hierarchy of noble officials existed in the shape inherited from the Middle Ages. Their offices were lifelong, unpaid and completely independent from the royal power. This traditional system had nothing in common with modern bureaucracy in the Weberian sense, in which each civil servant has a defined limit of authority, is promoted according to regulations, draws his salary from the government (and does not receive gifts from business clients) and can be deprived of his office or transferred to another position. The meaning of such a bureaucracy (which in Western and Central Europe was created by absolutism) in the development of liberalism relies on its leveling function: it united the country both in the territorial sense (abolishing the individual character of different provinces) and in the social sense (limiting the privileges of the estates). At the same time it prepared the triumph of the principle of equality before the law.

The differences between Poland and those countries which passed through the training of absolutism can be reduced to the absence of centralizing and unifying processes in the Commonwealth. Speaking of Polish noble society of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, only with great caution can one use the term “civil society.” This term indicates, after all, a society organized on the basis of equality before the law, as opposed to a society based on a separate law for each estate. In this sense a civil society did not exist in the Commonwealth, irrespective of the high degree of par-

ticipation of the nobility in the political life. The very idea of all-embracing citizenship was non-existent—a nobleman was not a citizen of the whole state, but only of his land (*terrigena*), whereas the town-dwellers could be only citizens of separate towns, not of a non-existing “urban estate” as a whole.¹⁰

Although the connection between the medieval political estate system of the Commonwealth and the modern parliamentary system cannot be denied, only certain elements have continued from one system to the other and these had to be transferred into a new, fundamentally different context. For this reason, one has, I believe, to acquiesce (although with some reservation) to the opinion of those historians who in the Commonwealth of the nobility see the “unfinished stage of state-building” rather than a prototype of a modern liberal state.¹¹

Reformers of the Polish Enlightenment therefore stood before a gigantic challenge. It was necessary to reshape the foundations of the political system, form a concept of sovereignty and of the collective will, gradually mellow the opposition of the estates, while getting closer to the still very distant idea of equality before the law. More important than detailed solutions was the spiritual atmosphere. The structure of the concepts themselves was changing in such a way as to make possible the emergence of Polish liberal thought. In the culture of Polish and probably even of central European Baroque, existentialist and religious thought dominated over political thought, and the latter was strictly bound with theology. There occurred, therefore, a change of interest because in the thought of the Enlightenment political-social problems take priority.

These problems were obviously present also in Baroque thought—however, not only their context, but also the method of reasoning itself was basically different. A certain seventeenth-century author wrote that the political system of the Commonwealth is an obvious proof of God’s omnipotence, for hundreds of years breathing life into the political system which, from the human perspective, would be completely unable to exist.¹² In the framework of Baroque poetics of concepts and paradoxes, such an expression could have been taken as a serious, factual analysis—a basic change had to occur in the ways of seeing the world to begin to see it as absurd. Metaphysics had to make way for economical and social theory; wealth, freedom, contract, development, profit, trade and laws had to take the place of wretchedness, dust, sin, body, lust; a logical deduction had to gain a higher worth than the oxymoron, paradox or a witty pun.

The conflict between the Enlightenment and the Baroque has been frequently presented as a conflict between reason and superstition, light and darkness, progress and backwardness. It is worth noting that these were two separate, but coherent views of the world. Whilst Baroque culture noted its greatest achievements in the field of fine arts, the main output of the Enlightenment remains social and political thought. There is no criteria which would allow us to decide whether the dramatic quality and the expression of Baroque art, struggling with basic religious and existentialist matters, are more or less valuable than the splendid achievements of the thought of the Enlightenment which built the foundations of modern democracy. The Baroque vision of cyclical changes, if one is to treat it as a serious theory of social change, is as useless as the Enlightenment theory of linear progress. The historian can only show why the latter was favorable to modernization and economic development and why the break-up of the Baroque view of the world was an essential prerequisite for the development of Polish liberalism.

The political theory of the Enlightenment, similarly to its medieval and ancient predecessors, was based on the concept of the law of nature. The new version of this concept, however, was characterized by certain different features. Whilst the classical theory considered the family as the basic community, from which—by way of evolution—state communities were formed, the new theory's starting point was the consideration of a state of nature, in which exist only autonomous and equal individuals. The former taught the individual the way of a proper life, the latter spoke about the rights of the individual, using the language of individual rights and not that of obligations. It is no wonder that the theory of the law of nature, as reformulated in the seventeenth century, was well suited for the philosophical basis of the emergence of liberal thought.¹³

The secularization of social thought belongs to the most important intellectual tendencies of the age of the Enlightenment. We are not concerned here at all with the spectacular anti-clericalism of some thinkers of this era, but with the much more important process of the separation of socio-political and religious thought (which does not have to indicate the denial of the purpose of the latter). God of the Enlightened is the ultimate guarantee of the law of nature and of the orderliness of the world, but in specific social studies He becomes even more a "superfluous hypothesis." Rationalism becomes not only the method of getting to know the world, but also an ideology: the world is arranged rationally, so the law of nature can be discovered by reason, without the help of revelation.

A second equally important novelty is the idea of progress that replaced the Baroque concept (derived from the Middle Ages) of the “wheel of fortune” and the cyclical changes of human fortunes. Only as a result of this radical intellectual change could there appear ideas of directed political change with regard to the previous program of reform. The deal based on the natural law is not given once and for all, but it has to be discovered and introduced into life. This made possible a departure from the basically medieval legal formalism, so typical in the old Polish Commonwealth that excluded any possibility of an innovation in the political system. Now it was possible to accept the modern idea of the rule of law which implies the possibility of the lawful rebuilding of the legal system.¹⁴

All these changes had to affect in some way the ideas prevailing in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth. The gradual departure from the principle of common consent in legislation indicated a true revolution in the concepts that referred to the state, to the individual, and to the sovereignty. This revolution started when the Piarist Stanisław Konarski launched a frontal attack on the principle of *liberum veto* in his work *O skutecznym rad sposobie* (On an Effective Counsel, 1760–1763). An increasing recognition of the majority principle marked a departure from the quasi-federal structure of the old Commonwealth. The next stage had to be the admission of the non-nobles to the parliament.

The role of the press in spreading the ideals of the Enlightenment is difficult to overrate. The press, through the mere fact of its existence and circulation, irrespective even of the conveyed texts, helped the democratization and the unification of society (although this social influence was still very limited on Polish soil). The main role was played by the magazine *Monitor*, published in Warsaw in 1764–1785, and modeled on English periodical magazines. Its journalism, dealing with social, cultural and every day matters, rather than with politics, directly hits at the foundations of the estate system, praising the social mobility that made possible the promotion of talented plebeians with benefit for the whole country. In the *Monitor* there emerges the modern concept of citizenship which embraces the inhabitants of the whole country; it emphasizes the importance of the “obligations, which we are owing to our country”—to our country, and not to the voivodship, religion or the estate.¹⁵

The complicated evolution of the concept of a nation can be reduced to the slow widening of the meaning of the term “nation” from the noble estate to all the inhabitants of the Commonwealth. “The nation” remains, however, a political one. The ethnic language criterion will emerge only in

the romantic era, but it will not have a fundamental role until the end of the nineteenth century.¹⁶

Emphasizing the role of education as one of the motors of change, a journalist of the *Monitor* regrets that the majority of educated people choose prestigious “liberal arts,” neglecting trade and other practical fields regarded as less honorable. The *Monitor*, dreaming of a complete change of hierarchy in social values, praised “the middle estate between the nobility and peasantry, whose usefulness [...] we should know.” The author, disguised under the pseudonym of *Literacki* (Mr Literate), writes about the hard life of men of letters: the nascent Polish intelligentsia begins to be aware of its common fate.¹⁷

The Enlightenment introduced statistics (the word then indicated a comprehensive description of the economic and social situation of a given region, not exclusively numerical data). Józef Wybicki tried to establish the number of inhabitants of the Commonwealth, considering the factual knowledge of such affairs as the starting point of all reforms. Wybicki, one of the authors writing in the *Monitor* and co-worker of Andrzej Zamoyski in the plan for the new code of law, became acquainted with the works of Montesquieu and other thinkers of the Enlightenment during his studies at Leiden. He was one of the firsts to introduce western ideas of freedom and the concept of social contract to the Poles. Wybicki differentiates “natural freedom,” which rules in the state of nature, and “social freedom,” which exists in civilized countries. The definition of the latter is very close to that of Montesquieu: “Social freedom is nothing else but the possibility to do anything that one likes, with the exception of that which is prohibited by law.”¹⁸

Wybicki’s definition of “freedom” and “rights” fundamentally differs from the analogical concepts in traditional Polish political thought. In the traditional Polish estate society—similarly as in the Western Middle Ages—“rights” and “liberties” indicated a certain specific entitlement acknowledged to the individual or corporation by the sovereign or other superior. Rights (namely, privileges) were therefore the basis of freedom. According to Wybicki, however, freedom is given to each person by the power of natural law; it is gained by the mere fact of birth. The role of statute law is therefore completely opposite to the theory of the previous era: it does not create freedom, but prescribes its limits, so that no one who uses his freedom encroaches on the freedom of another person.

On the edge of the political and social problems, the peasant question grows in Poland of the Enlightenment. The complaints about the depriva-

tion of the peasants are of course nothing new. In the late eighteenth century, however, concrete plans for reforming the conditions of the peasants appear. Most frequently, as in neighboring states, these were directed at the delimitation and standardization of peasants' duties, limiting patrimonial judicial authority over the peasants, and—in more radical concepts—towards a change from serf labor into rent.

At the same time the reform of the clergy and the Church–state relations occupied the minds more than the peasant question. The mutual relation of secular and ecclesiastical power once again re-emerged as a major problem in European history, as the newly developed modern states claimed unlimited sovereignty over their whole territories. Political and ideological conflicts united even more clearly because for the first time in the history of Europe mature theories emerged negating the necessity of any institutional intervention between the individual and God. Whilst the French Enlightenment was characterized by strong opposition not only against the political ambition of the Catholic Church, but also against Catholic doctrine, the German Enlightenment strove only to limit the political aspirations of Catholicism, not undertaking war with religion itself. Although the radically anti-Catholic French ideas did gain some influence in Poland, the will to settle relationships with the Church dominated, and the enlightened elite were hoping to gain the support of the clergy for the proposed reforms.

The spread of protoliberal categories of social philosophy in Poland owes a great deal to the followers of physiocratism. This theory, which came from France, saw national wealth solely as the fruit of agriculture, not as a result of the development of trade or industry. Negating mercantilism, which was the official French economic doctrine, physiocrats were opposed to the intervention of the state in the economy which, according to them, disturbed the proper order of nature. In the political field, physiocrats supported the enlightened absolutism—as long as it did not meddle in the economy.¹⁹ The handbook *Nauka prawa przyrodzonego, politycznego, ekonomiki i prawa narodów* (The Study of Natural and Political Law, Economics and the Law of Nations) was written by the Piarist Hieronim Stroynowski, for schools of the Commission for National Education and presented an exposition on the new doctrine using terms which would soon be adopted by liberal thought. Personal freedom, private property and the sanctity of contract are basic concepts in Stroynowski's handbook. Ten paragraphs, nearly seventy pages, are devoted to explaining the necessity of free trade. Thus the way of thinking slowly appeared with-

out which the emergence of liberalism in Poland would not have been possible.

Mercantalism also influenced the emerging Polish liberal thought. It came to Poland above all in the form of cameralism that developed during the eighteenth century in Prussia, the Habsburg monarchy and other German countries. In comparison with the French prototype, cameralism even more strongly emphasized the importance of the state for the economy and concentrated its attention on the finance and revenue of the government; administrative matters interested it more than the purely economic ones.

Stanisław Grabski noted that, whereas physiocracy as an ideology was in late eighteenth century-Poland incomparably more popular than cameralism, for specific problems Polish reformers more frequently drew from cameralistic thought.²⁰ The economic situation of the Commonwealth was closer to the situation of German countries than to France, also it was more convenient to take Germany as an example. The principles of cameralism, demanding a strong state authority, could not be realized in Poland on a wider scale, nevertheless they influenced economic and social thought. These influences can be seen in the *Listy Patriotyczne* (Patriotic Letters) of Wybicki, and even more so in the works of the economist of the era of the Great Diet, Jan Ferdynand Nax. The basic liberal ideas that we noticed in Strojnowski's handbook are absent in this work; in details, however, his vision of the economic future comes very close to that which will dominate the works of Polish liberals in the next one hundred years. Nax enthusiastically draws the vision of a blossoming industry and agriculture in the country, in which the sound economic politics of the government is the main factor of development; the government not only cares about the development of education (including trade schools), agricultural companies and the development of a transport network, but also allocates finance for the development of crafts. Nax is skeptical about the increasingly fashionable slogans of economic freedom, considering the free trade as well as the abolition of guilds as harmful, or at least premature in the Polish situation.

In the realm of politics, Nax proclaims ideas that are almost classically liberal. Referring to Montesquieu he praises the concept of the division of powers and, fearing tyranny, moves even to ponder on the superiority of elective monarchy over hereditary monarch. This fusing of liberal individualist slogans with economic interventionism is very typical of Polish liberals in the nineteenth century. They never considered political liberal-

ism to be intrinsically connected with economic liberalism, and they saw the motor of development in the activity of the state.

In spite of favoring the elective monarchy, Nax sees the hereditary throne as better ensuring the safety of the country. In this way he touches one of the basic problems of liberal thought. In what way do we juxtapose the freedom of the individual and freedom of the country, the welfare of the society and the welfare of its citizens? Are these values always convergent? If they find themselves in conflict, which one is to have priority?

In the era of the Enlightenment two opposing theories dominated in this matter. One, derived from mercantilist economic thought, saw the world as a game in which the profit of one side equals the loss of the other. The second more optimistic theory emerged in Great Britain and formed a theoretical generalization of the British industrial experience and economic growth; it preached that progress is achieved with benefit for all, and human interests are complementary.²¹ In the thought of the Polish Enlightenment one can find influences of both of these outlooks, but with the passage of time the optimistic vision triumphed to become (as in the whole of Europe) one of the foundations of liberal thought. Even in those cases where reality showed this view to be false, an attempt was still made to incorporate the experience into the optimistic framework. Admittedly, modernization had to be tied up with deprivations, but it was easy to modify the doctrine: although the interest of the individual and that of the society as a whole could appear incompatible in the short run, still, in the long run, individual interest must turn out to be identical with common interest.

The journalist writing for *Monitor* believed in the “close affinity of the public good with the well-being of all and with the well-being of the individual.”²² However, he subtly changed stress suggesting that an individual, who cares about the welfare of all, acts at the same time for his own benefit, whereas in liberal thought the converse is true: benefit for everyone results from the egotistical actions of the individual. For Wybicki, sympathizing with cameralism, the conflict is only apparent: “All laws, which have as their aim the unity and happiness of the state, although seemingly opposed to natural freedom, confirm civil liberty.”²³

Stanisław Staszic took the matter even further: “The Rt. Hon. Rzewuski’s work about the succession to the throne [...] proves the fact about which there was never any doubt, namely, that election is more suitable to the freedom of the nation than succession to the throne. This work, in spite of myself, aroused in me [...] these thoughts: namely, that we should

for the good of Poland, in order to prepare us for true freedom, for a length of time come under autocracy which would make us more equal to each other and erase these persistent superstitions and prejudices [...] True, succession to the throne is one step towards losing freedom. But the election of kings is halfway towards losing the nation. First, the nation—then freedom. First, life—then comfort.”²⁴

The problems summarily sketched above will accompany Polish liberal thought throughout the nineteenth century or even longer. Obviously they do not exhaust the richness of the Polish Enlightenment thought from which radical democrats, socialists and even some conservatives will draw ideas. If one should wish to summarize the “liberal” elements of the Polish Enlightenment in a single formula, then it could be reduced to the experience of backwardness. “Poland is still in the fifteenth century; the whole of Europe is at the end of the eighteenth century,” wrote Staszic.²⁵ The old Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth hitherto considered by the nobility as superior to all Western European state systems suddenly appeared to the new Enlightened generation as poor and anarchical. Staszic and his contemporaries clearly saw the necessity of making up several hundred years to catch up with the western part of the continent.

Let us introduce in more detail the views of one of the most eminent Polish thinkers of the Enlightenment, Hugo Kollataj, expressed in his work *Listy Anonima* (Anonymous Letters) written in the years 1788–1789 in form of letters to the President of the Great Diet, Stanisław Małachowski. The work of Kollataj, summing up the achievements of political and social thought of the Polish Enlightenment, may serve as a testimony to the state of Polish reformist in political thought before the dawn of the nineteenth century.

One can see at first glance how complete was the change that came about from the mid-eighteenth century. Kollataj sees the Commonwealth not as a conglomeration of provinces but as a modern state, sovereign both internally and externally. “Everyone, as many the Polish soil will hold, whether poor or rich, is subject to the Commonwealth. She has the highest authority over us, her laws rule over, her will commands us.”²⁶ The necessity of a separate executive power is obvious to him. “Our whole misfortune has come from one source that we did not have a permanent government”²⁷—permanent, that is one that would act between the sessions of the Diet as well. Kollataj understands the necessity of a permanent army and works out its budget in detail. In defiance of physiocrats and in the spirit of emerging liberal economy, he considers the artisans and trades-

men as contributing to the wealth of the country not less than agriculturists.

KoŹataj likes to call Polish reforms “the gentle revolution”—similarly, in fact, did the whole reform press, emphasizing the peacefulness of the changes.²⁸ Preserving “a free government” is among his main concerns, on a par with the improvement of the administration and the reform of the political system. He sees Poland as a republic, but in the eighteenth-century sense of the term, and so with a king as the head of the state. He understands the necessity of “legal guarantees of liberty” because the parliamentary system itself does not guarantee them. In his tone, akin already to nineteenth-century liberalism, there are still undoubtedly the echoes of traditional republicanism of the Polish nobility: “The intolerable verdicts of one despot [...] fill with fear everyone who has to be subordinate to them. What is one despot to so many senators and delegates who are allowed at every session to shake up the whole constitution of the government?”²⁹ He wants to allow landowners, as also—with certain limitations—the owners of capital, to elect delegates: he shows, therefore, as liberals through most of the nineteenth century, a preference for the property census opposing privileges of birth on the one hand, and democratic electoral rights, on the other.

However, in Hugo KoŹataj we can detect—both in specific ideas and in general concepts—a multitude of solutions different from those accepted in the European thought.

Emphasizing the necessity of efficient governmental authority acting between the Diet sessions, KoŹataj at the same time attempts to define its competence in such a way that it would not threaten freedom. He creates, therefore, a peculiar structure, in which the executive power belongs to the “permanent diet”—a “rump” parliament, continually present in the capital and being only a plenipotentiary of the provinces, from which it receives binding instructions. KoŹataj condemns the very idea of “ministers” who would give advice at the king’s side—because it would be the seed of absolutism.

To the voivodships he leaves a very wide autonomy not only in form of provincial assemblies, but also of a separate administration. The transformation of previous noble hierarchies of officials into a modern bureaucracy belonged to the fundamental achievements of West European absolutism and is also an important aim of Hugo KoŹataj. Civil servants are to advance according to hierarchy—only those who have previously held lower positions can hold higher ones. A civil servant is to receive a salary. At the

same time, however, civil servants would not come from the nomination of the central authority, but would be chosen by the voivodship assembly. It would therefore in essence be not a state administration but a provincial one; the former would exist only on a central level. Even stranger is the fact, that Kollataj foresees lifelong offices (undoubtedly only in the case when the holder of a given position does not advance in his career), yet simultaneously opposes the irremovability of judges! Nor does he want the liquidation of estate jurisdiction, but only its complete reform: a nobleman therefore has to be answerable before the district court, a townsman before a municipal court, a peasant—irrespective of whose subject he is—before a referendary court, the clergy must be subordinate to a consistory, the army to a court martial and the teachers to the court of the Commission of National Education.

If in this writer, so open to new concepts, sharp and untiring in seeking new solutions for the political system, we see proposals which seem great anomalies from the point of view of the later development of European states, then can we talk about a certain provincialism of even the most eminent minds of the Polish Enlightenment? It has to be remembered that the classical model of liberal governments—the parliamentary cabinet system—was only just forming, and that one of the truisms of the European thought of the Enlightenment was that Republicanism is suitable only for small states, such as ancient and medieval city-states. “Poland, its area until recently being greater than that of the German Empire” cannot take an example from tiny republics such as Holland, Switzerland or Venice. “It has no examples to follow and it cannot have any.”³⁰

It would therefore be unfair to judge Kollataj’s proposals from the point of view of 19th-century constitutionalism. One can only wonder if Poland could not have formed its own separate path to a modern state, building it rather on the basis of a strong self-governing or local institutions, following the example of Anglo-Saxon states than on the basis of a disciplined bureaucratic hierarchy, as the German states did. In both cases, however, the development of a modern state would indicate a complete change in the spirit of the institutions of the Old Commonwealth rather than their continuation.

It may be not without some interest to compare the *Anonymous Letters* with one of the most famous works of liberal thought which came into being almost exactly at the same time: the letters of Alexander Hamilton, John Jay and James Madison about the new constitution of the United States, known under the title of *Federalist Papers*.³¹ Already on the formal

plane, the similarities are striking: the work has the form of anonymous letters discussing the plan for the new constitution which would bring about a complete reform of the political system. What is more, the reform in both cases was to go in an identical direction: towards the building of a strong center of power and the transformation of the quasi-federal structure of the almost independent provinces into a united state, yet with the guarantee of a wide scope of freedom. It seems that the American reformers even more than the Polish ones feared the horrors of decentralization, anarchy and all types of “a state within a state.” If so, we would have proof that the Polish problems were typical of the era which attempted to build the fundamentals of the modern state on the ruins of what was then called “feudality.” The backwardness of Polish economy could make the situation more dramatic, but it did not change the nature of the necessary reforms.

The Great Diet (1788–1792) and the Constitution of the 3rd of May 1791 formed a step not only on the road to a change in the political system, but also towards the creation of modern legal and political concepts in Poland. In the preamble of the Constitution the nation is understood in the traditional meaning of the word as a noble estate, but in article IV, acknowledging the peasantry as the “most numerous amongst the population of the nation,” this concept indicates already all of the country’s inhabitants. Stanisław Grodziski writes about “civil rights” which were implicitly introduced by the legislation of the Great Diet; that is, rights which are not limited to any estate, but are binding to the whole population, such as the limited freedom of conscience granted by article I of the constitution, as well as freedom of speech and of the press, acknowledged by a separate law.

Some of the political solutions of the Constitution of the 3rd of May can be placed within the realm of liberal tradition. An institution called *Straż praw* (Guardian of the Laws) was formed in likeness to the English cabinet, although the idea of parliamentary responsibility was not introduced in full. The legislation of the Great Diet excluded non land-owning nobility from political rights. Thus, a system in which political rights were deprived from belonging to the noble estate was to be replaced by a new one, akin to nineteenth-century parliamentary systems, where a property census granted political rights. In Poland, however, the political rights depended on landed property only.³²

The influence of Polish estate parliamentarism on the nascent of Polish liberal thought was manifested in a much more indirect way than those historians would like to believe for whom the old Commonwealth remained

an unequalled prototype of liberal institutions. In historiography there exists the concept of gentry liberalism; some Hungarian historians are especially eager to use it claiming that the Hungarian gentry formed the functional equivalent of the French middle class and—as such—was a natural social basis of liberalism.

The researchers using this concept, however, face numerous problems, for it is often impossible to decide whether a given opinion or political movement belongs already to the “modern” liberalism or still to the “ancient” idea of estate liberties. One cannot, however, do without it, especially in studying the era between the Congress of Vienna and the Spring of Nations (1815–1848). The influence of the old Commonwealth on the development of Polish liberalism manifested undoubtedly more in the legacy of certain “style” of political behavior than in the legacy of the ideas. The routine of the running of Diets and assemblies in the Duchy of Warsaw and in the Polish Kingdom (between 1815 and 1830), the ways of organizing followers on the basis of regional connection—all this was the legacy which lasted well into the nineteenth century. In the realm of political ideas, however, in Poland, the gentry opposition against the unifying activity of absolute governments played—it would seem—a smaller role than in German countries or in the Habsburg monarchy. This occurred for two reasons: first the lack of Polish absolutism hindered the growth of a tradition of opposition against it and in a certain way rendered the nobility defenseless against the absolutism of the partitioning powers and second—more importantly—the Russian despotism, which governed over most of the area of the old Commonwealth, did not leave much room for the politics of gentry opposition which most strongly manifested itself at the diets of the Duchy of Warsaw and the Polish Kingdom.

Historians often used to contrast the radical trend of the Enlightenment with its allegedly pretotalitarian tendencies and moderate liberal trends. This point of view is probably justified in the abstract field of the history of political thought where, in truth, the train of thought from the Jacobins to the modern form of “utopian social engineering” can be presented in a very convincing way. Maybe this argument also finds confirmation in the history of France where the rich and multifaceted culture of the Enlightenment divides into numerous trends, which relatively easily sort out individual thinkers. Things present themselves differently in Poland and other Central and Eastern European countries. Here the Enlightenment was weaker. It had to fight against stronger opponents, so the division into trends was less clear: the feeling of weakness encouraged the thinkers of

the Enlightenment to close ranks. A radical Polish or Hungarian Jacobin was, therefore, more inclined to a compromise than his French counterpart and, in turn, a moderate follower of a constitutional monarchy, considered radical by his conservative surroundings, by sheer force of fact found himself in a position more extreme than a person proclaiming the same views in France or even in Western Germany.

Therefore a division into “liberal democracy” and “totalitarian democracy,” introduced by Talmon in his classical work, is of great value as a general guide, however, as the basis of classifying any politician to a certain trend is—at least on Polish soil—completely useless. Characteristic of the whole group of activists of the Enlightenment is the evolution from Jacobinism to even more moderate liberalism, carried out without renouncing the previous political or philosophical views. The history of this evolution (which also finds its equivalent in other countries) is an important element in the early history of Polish liberalism between the third partition and the Congress of Vienna.

II

After the final partition of the old Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (1795) many of the former radicals found a place in the Society of Polish Republicans—a clandestine organization founded in 1797. It is difficult to find liberal elements in their ideology; the general concepts of the statute of the organization, named the “Pre-social contract” (because the “Social Contract” will only be able to be formed in the nation after the regaining of freedom), comes close to the uncompromising republicanism of the Jacobins. The specific recommendations of the same statute, however, retain moderateness, in contrast to the severe theoretical assertions. Collecting books about the history and the present state of Polish lands as well as enlightening the peasants constitute the main aims of the conspirators. Another aim has a more “clandestine” character—the acquisition of information about the activities of the partitioning powers, and especially about the state of their army.³³ The Society of Republicans ceased to function in the first years of the nineteenth century, and some of its activists found themselves in the Warsaw Society of the Friends of Learning founded in 1800. However, a new moment of activity did not arrive until 1807 when Napoleon, having destroyed the Prussian might, entered the territory of the old Commonwealth and from the lands of the

second and third Prussian Partitions formed a small state, called the Duchy of Warsaw.

For emerging Polish liberal thought this was a turning point, maybe more important than the third partition itself. Napoleon, having granted the Duchy a constitution and civil code named after him, introduced onto Polish soil a new organization of the state, creating a bureaucratic machine manned by the Poles themselves. The former Jacobins did not succeed in gaining enough of Napoleon's confidence to be entrusted with ruling the Duchy, nevertheless they were actively involved in politics. The one-time Jacobins, later "republicans," now became keen advocates of constitutional monarchy—a "reasoned liberty easily linked with the Monarchic Government."³⁴ The elite of the Duchy, however, was not formed of them, but of the more moderate veterans of the reforms of the King Stanislas' era, who were concentrated in the Society of Friends of Learning. Stanisław Kostka Potocki and Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz are especially worth mentioning. The views of this more moderate group grew from the same basis as the views of the ex-Jacobins and, from the ideological point of view, both trends became much closer to each other.

It seemed that Napoleon fulfilled the dreams of the enlightened generation about the political system that was devised according to universal principles of Reason, in agreement with the law of nature and ensuring the happiness of the citizens. Hugo Kollataj admired the radicalism of the changes. He wrote in 1807 that before the partitions "Lithuania, tied to its statute, did not want to consent to a common civil and criminal code; [...] in Greater Poland, the voivodships were smaller than the counties in the voivodships of Little Poland and of Lithuania, and because of this neither the financial administration nor the administration of justice could be carried out well. Just imagine other inconveniences which the executive authority would have to encounter [...] even after the constitution of the 3rd of May? The noble estate did not want to bring itself to the complete reform of its prerogatives, and other classes of people were not yet suitably disposed to accept it." Now, however—what a change—"all these difficulties disappeared in the face of the penetrating wit of our Legislator." Napoleon destroyed "at once the harmful images that the Poles had of provincial independence," and in effect "the spirit of provincialism fell for ever in this constitution."

"The uniformity of the government"—this was one of the key formulae of Polish journalism of the Napoleonic times. The Enlightened intellectuals were still afraid of the specter of "exclusivity"—of the political system in

which all regions, towns and social groups are governed by separate legal systems, the executive power does not exist at all, and particularism erodes the spirit of a civil community. For Kollataj the name “voivodship” already had a mark of “the spirit of exclusion,” he joyfully greeted the change of name to “departments”—free from the burden of historical traditions, “equal regarding the area and population,” giving the executive “uniform [...] help and service in carrying out laws, financial administration, army conscription and such similar things.”³⁵

Should they be formed, political parties would be just as harmful as territorial regionalism. Rajmund Rembieliński wrote: “Let us never form separate nations within one kingdom [...], we are all children of one Motherland, that is honor enough. Otherwise once again the spirit of fragmentation will be instilled, which is so harmful for the public matter.” Kollataj was more precise: “We must defend ourselves from intrigue and the renewed formation of political parties [...] We do not now need any opposition, as for example in England where it was introduced into the constitution itself; [...] we should carefully erase any anarchic thoughts from our minds. There should not be a situation where we are followers of Radziwiłł, Czartoryski or Potocki [...] We should follow only one Motherland, only one Napoleon.”³⁶ A clear apprehension of the return of an aristocratic oligarchy is linked with the conviction generally accepted in French Enlightenment that truth is self-evident, and that to insist in pursuing an error can only be done from ill will. That is why the effect of freedom must be unanimous, uniform thought because anyone who reasons with sincerity must come to the same conclusions.

“Uniformity” does not only mean centralization within the framework of the Polish lands—as a further plan, Napoleon gave Poland the possibility of joining one great united European organism under the protectorate of France. Hugo Kollataj showed his fellow countrymen this vision with verve, the like of which we shall not find in Polish political thought until Piłsudski’s federal plans after the First World War: here Napoleon raises the Western Empire which not only will ensure safety for Poland, but will open up wonderful possibilities of economic development. In the whole of Europe there will be “one system of measures, one system of weights and one monetary system [...] Then the inhabitant of any part of the world, in whichever direction he travels [...] will find in every country one, shall we say, Motherland; because everywhere there is the same constitution, the same measures, weights and coins; no country’s customs will be foreign to him; only the speech and climate will be different. What more can one say

about the freedom that Napoleon guaranteed for traders! What more can one say about his efforts to restore the freedom of sea trade!”³⁷

A tool was also discovered for the realization of the future happiness of mankind, for the creation of a new political system and the final eradication of “exclusivism.” This tool was the state administration, a subject of enormous fascination for the former Jacobins. There is something symbolic in the fact that one of the former members of the Society of Republicans, the lawyer Stanisław Węgrzecki, published a booklet devoted to the political system of the Duchy, which had the form of a commentary on some tables and presented the structure of the interdependence between departmental offices. A political system that could be so schematically presented must have seemed the ideal of rationalism. “The administration,” wrote Węgrzecki in another of his books, “is vigilant in overturning all ill in society. [...] Before a child enters the world, it is already under the care of the administration, which is concerned with the healthy diet of the mother, with clean air, with distancing all unpleasant and disgusting sights; during the birth of the child it keeps watch that a person not skilled in midwifery [...] does not cripple the child. When the child enters the world, its parents enlist it at the Registry Office in order to assure it the laws that it is entitled to.” A youth “through school [...] acquiring more and more knowledge, becomes able to repay the Government which looked after him from the cradle, and is registered by the Army.” When a person dies “then the administration which was so attentive in writing down the newly born on a society list, erases it in order to assure itself of the experienced loss.”³⁸ Besides the influence of the French Revolution, a fundamental role is played by cameralist influences. They existed already before the final Partition of Poland, but their time came only now, in the centralist political system of the Duchy of Warsaw. Not unimportant for their popularity was the fact that the lands of the Duchy remained under Prussian rule for a dozen or so years.

One of the enthusiasts of a competent bureaucracy was Antoni Gliszczyński, one-time delegate of the Great Diet, later an activist of the Society of Polish Republicans, and in the Duchy of Warsaw the prefect of the department of Bydgoszcz. He also considered “strength and unity of administration” as the ideal, and for candidates to clerical jobs in the department of Bydgoszcz he put together a whole list of examination literature, embracing above all authors from the circle of German cameralists.³⁹ He translated, supplementing with his own additions, one of the typical products of this field—*Nauka policji* (The Science of the Police) by Johann Paul

Harl.⁴⁰ Police, in the eighteenth-century understanding of the term, meant the whole of the administration and was understood both as a branch of the science of management (*Polizeiwissenschaft*) and as a practical activity, aiming at the assurance of peace and safety. Harl-Gliszczyński's book is an excellent example of the "totalitarianism" of the Enlightenment thought that does not leave out any aspect of human life. Harl, in Gliszczyński's version, falls sometimes into a *sui generis* sacralization of the police—which may look grotesque to us.

For the Enlightened generation the main sense of the abolition of serfdom by the constitution of the Duchy of Warsaw rested on the fact that it struck a decisive blow at "exclusivism"—they saw the economic importance of this step only at a more distant plan. In accordance with the so-called December decree of Prince Frederick Augustus (1807), the granting of personal liberty to the peasants did not mean the granting of land ownership. However, the old feudal dependence ceased at least in theory, and the relationship between the peasant and the lord changed into a voluntary rent paid in labor, not in money. This was enough for the Enlightened elites: they acknowledged that the former nation of nobles had ceased to exist and that an equality before the law—that "highest privilege given to mankind"⁴¹—signifies the formation of one uniform nation, which from now covers people of all strata. Further reforms are not necessary, and all new concessions for the peasants would be an insult to justice.

Now, when slavery comes to an end, the most important field of activity of the government with respect to the peasants is not social reform, but education. Only education is able to eradicate the centuries' old prejudices and make people understand the laws of nature that rule the world and direct their lives. "National education" requires that "young people should be educated in the same way throughout the whole country [...], nobody [...] can send the children of the Motherland to a foreign country because the Motherland would not know if they are educated in the way that it wants them to be because the education would not then be uniform; they would lack that spirit of patriotism which is the basis of national education [...] Children of all tribes and religions must go to the same school [...] The Government must not allow separate Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist etc. schools; there is only to be a Polish school, so that everyone is educated according to the same principle and in the same patriotic spirit." The language of education must everywhere be the Polish language.⁴²

Gliszczyński thought similarly; "private education must be prohibited, it gives rise to pride, independence, isolation, conceit and thousands [...] of

defects.”⁴³ Not everyone was so radical, but the direction of thought, using the school as a weapon against “exclusivism,” was everywhere the same.

The development of schooling, however, similarly to the development of state administration, came upon a basic obstacle; the weakness of the local administrative structures. For the secular states, reaching even deeper into the life of the citizen, there existed only one accessible model, the extensive and long experienced administration of the Catholic Church. The Government could not hope that the network of parishes could be replaced by a network of local state institutions, so the use of priests as teachers and clerks of the lowest level seemed to be the only answer. Although many of the enlightened intellectuals remained under the influence of radical French anticlericals, the inspiration for the Church politics of the Duchy did not come from France, but rather from the Habsburg tradition of Josephinism aiming not to destroy the Church, but to make it an ally in the work of the reforms. In Polish thought the vision of the subordination of the Church to the state on the Habsburg model was presented by Wybicki a generation earlier in *Listy Patriotyczne* (Patriotic Letters).

Such was the strength in this way of thinking that it spoke even to people who had no trace of radical persuasion. One of the main promoters of modernizing the Duchy by the introduction of an administration on the French model and by the subordination of the Church to the state was the Minister of Justice Feliks Łubieński. In 1807 he strongly backed the introduction of the Napoleonic Code, and four years later came out with a project for the acceptance of the French penal code in the Duchy. This “most religious Warsaw minister,”⁴⁴ attacked by the Jacobins for his conservatism, became therefore the object of criticism from the clergy.

The practical meaning of the conflict should not be overrated because patriotism and the perspective of regaining full independence of Poland forced the episcopate to cooperate with the authorities of the Duchy; the Enlightened politicians also understood the social function of religion and, whatever they thought privately, they knew that morals which relied only on “virtue” would take a long time to be accepted by the Polish masses.⁴⁵ And yet the ideological conflict was very sharp. The Government wanted the parish to be the lowest unit of the State administration with the parish priest fulfilling the functions of a clerk keeping the registry books from the pulpit notifying the people of the orders of authorities, and in the village school not only instilling knowledge into the village children, but teaching also the ideology of the state. Fascinated by the “uniformity of the government,” the Enlightened generation saw as self-evident that the separate

status of the Church was one of those feudal exclusions, such as the privileges of the nobility or the municipalities, it must therefore make way for a modern state, in which only one legal system can be binding. They were counting on the support of the enlightened clergy. "We shall be better people under the eye of the government," a certain vicar-reformer declared in the name of the clergy in an essay characteristically entitled *O potrzebie Rządowego nad Duchowieństwem Dozoru* (The Need for Government Supervision over the Clergy).⁴⁶

The state wanted to supervise the education and views of the clergy in the same way as of any other of its clerks. "No one can enter a monastery or become a lay priest until [...] he gets consent from the prefect," ordered the prefect of the department of Bydgoszcz Antoni Gliszczyński in 1808. "Much depends on whether a person who aims to follow the priesthood, who is to be [...] a teacher to the people and a clerk fulfilling many government orders, is fit for the job". It is therefore necessary to examine, if the "candidate [...] has an understanding of the constitution and laws of the country, and a strict duty to comply with them, especially in relation to the tolerance, agreement and unity of citizens of various faiths? Does he want to join the clergy from a real desire to be useful to the country or in order to take refuge from wars or to do nothing or to have a lazy and idle life?"⁴⁷

The Minister of Justice wrote: "Granted, religion [...] undoubtedly [...] belongs to the clergy. But where a new parish is to be erected, then that does not [...] belong solely to the Church authorities [...] The erection of a new parish cannot take place without the opinion of the prefect and acknowledgement by the Minister, since this immediately ruins the orderliness of the established division of administrative units, the division of the counties, since it changes the regulations with respect to the clerks of the Registry. None of this belongs to the clergy."⁴⁸

The state authorities interfering in the organization of the Church proclaimed the classical liberal principle of the separation of the Church from the state at the same time. Here Łubieński assures "Prince Archbishop (of Gniezno, Ignacy Raczyński) that civil laws are so separate from religious ones that they do not restrict religion [...] they only guard the social order and personal property, leaving what is divine to God [...] Laws are for people and religion for souls."⁴⁹

The Church authorities, however, were opposed not only to the interference of the state, but also to the whole principle of separation. It was presupposed by them that in a state ruled by Poles, the Church would enjoy a

privileged position, similarly as it had in the former Commonwealth prior to the Partitions. Contrary to these expectations, most of the limitations laid by the Prussian government were retained, and even new ones were added. Primate Raczyński in vain appealed to the Prince of Warsaw, Frederick Augustus: "We ask your Majesty to bring back the bishops' influence in education and its supervision. Establish a law against those who blaspheme against the Catholic Faith, a law against the violators of the religious feasts [...] against adultery and public scandal. Order the magistrates to punish the offenders so that they are a help to the clerical authorities in need."⁵⁰ The Church considered it a great insult when the government invoked the "freedom of opinion" as the ground for religious tolerance—as though the Catholic religion were simply an "opinion" and not a "teaching from Heaven given by Jesus Christ."⁵¹ The Church did not demand personal religious belief from state officials but considered that "a person who is a public clerk, even if he has no religion in his heart, should show it in the presence of the people as this gives a good example. Hypocrisy, although hideous to God and the people, is not as harmful for the customs as is the open lack of Faith in the Public Offices."⁵²

The two sides spoke different languages, they understood legal and constitutional notions differently, and in support of their rights they called on the principles which the adversary did not acknowledge, so they could not convince one another. This basic incompatibility would make a truce between Catholics and Liberals impossible throughout the whole of the nineteenth century.

The formation of a modern state required not only reforms of the political system but also economic changes. Some of the enlightened thinkers were careful here—even a great enthusiast of administration, strong government and centralization, such as Stanisław Węgrzecki, had serious doubts about whether one should remove the guilds and privileges of the towns. The majority, however, saw the development of capitalist economy as the only chance for the country.

The naïve etatist enthusiasm of the enlightened elite of the Duchy of Warsaw could suggest that in order to modernize economy they would support the maximum interference of the state in economic life. To a certain degree this was true. The nobles' cheap state, in which the government covers all administrative costs from state demesnes, became inevitably obsolete, but, for a long time, it remained the ideal of the gentry. The people of the Enlightenment knew well that the Old Polish version of *laissez faire*, unlike the English one, leads to stagnation and not to economic growth, so

they energetically fought against it as did the Polish liberals throughout the whole nineteenth century. At the same time, however, their demand for the economic activity of the state did not have to mean intervention in the strict sense. It concerned rather a change in the infrastructure and the creation of new conditions for individual enterprises. The introduction of equal rights of every estate to conduct economic activities, the reorganization of taxes, care of the roads and navigable rivers, the organization of markets and fairs, help with credit—all this still did not exceed, even in the opinion of advocates of the free play of economic forces, the allowed activities of the state: in the conditions of contemporary Poland these were huge tasks and a government which would undertake these assignments would have to interfere deeply in the structure of the Polish economy.

Therefore it should come as no surprise that the work of Harl-Gliszczyński, full of the most detailed advice relating to the interference of the police in all aspects of human life, ends somewhat unexpectedly, with the praising of economic liberty and the slogan *laissez nous faire*. Dominik Krysiński advised looking for the “laws of economy in the works of Smith, Stewart, and Say,” that is the representatives of the classical school of liberalism (which did not prevent him from claiming that “as once France, so Poland will one day need the great Colbert.”⁵³ It appears that Krysiński, soon to become one of the main spokesmen for capitalist development, as yet was not fully familiar with the views of his masters). Whilst for Kollataj, the “economist” meant a physiocrat (Surowiecki still used the word in this meaning), in the time of the Duchy a characteristic shift occurred: “political economy” is just classical liberal economy, no other scientific economics exists. This will remain until the 1840s.

In accordance with the cameralist tradition, the interest of the Enlightened generation concentrated not so much on pure economic theory but on its application in administrative practice. “It is in the discretion of the government to use appropriate means and completely erase prejudices, if any still exist, which prevent noblemen from settling in towns and working in urban industry.”⁵⁴

The spread of private property was also dependent on the government. The matter concerned the sale of state domains, the former property of Polish kings because a modern state should maintain itself from taxes and not from its own landed estates. The government also had to settle the complicated property relations from the feudal era and replace all forms of divided property by allodial property. (“A small or great piece of land should have its owner,” wrote Kollataj.⁵⁵) Finally there was the question of

forming a “middle estate (*le tiers etat*) which we desperately need,” and which is indispensable “if our happiness and our political existence is to rest on solid grounds.” Thus wrote Antoni Gliszczyński, giving France as an example.⁵⁶ In this way he joined a large company of people who, over the last fifty years, tried to devise means of establishing the Western-style middle class in Poland.

One of the journalists composed a real paean in favor of private property: it is a good example of the lyrical spirit that used to overwhelm liberal minds throughout the nineteenth century, whenever the matter concerned the unlimited possibilities of economic development. Property ties a person to his place of residence. “Sometimes in contest with nature; sometimes changing inaccessible swamps into ploughed fields—another time tilling rock crags; another time changing woods into splendid gardens; another time driving wild beasts out of the forests; another time in the place of marshes founding numerous villages and flourishing cities. Land ownership is the motor of human action. The conclusion is clear: that country blooms the most that has the greatest number of landowners.”⁵⁷ When speaking of ownership, ownership of land is usually implied: modernizing probably more often means the modernizing of agriculture than the development of industry. This is also the case for Dominik Krysiński: “Towns, factories, workshops, although they have a great influence on the wealth of the nation are of only secondary importance for Poles [...] A well administered country, that is one in which the government aims to increase the number of landowners, in which the farmer is able to assemble capital; such a country, I say, will become richer and more populous without workshops and without great towns.” Towns “will emerge [...] when the villages are well populated.”⁵⁸

An important field of activity of the government on the road to economic growth has to be the reform of the tax system, together with the necessity for detailed measurements of the terrain, drawing of exact maps, taking into account the quality of the soil. This was also an element of the fight against “exclusivism,” as it made easier a unification of obligations towards the state. Besides the practical, equally obvious is the ideological aspect of the proposal to abandon all measures used in Poland in favor of the new French meters and hectares.

The most eminent Polish economist of the first years of the nineteenth century, Wawrzyniec Surowiecki, introduced a coherent program of economic development which systematizes the ideals of the enlightened intellectuals.⁵⁹ Surowiecki, similarly to Gliszczyński, and contrary to Krysiński,

saw the future of Polish capitalism in industrial development and not in the modernization of agriculture. Surowiecki writes at moments like a precursor of the theory of dependent development when, in the often used quote, he presents the tragic results of international free competition: "Faced by a stronger neighbor, the weaker has no other option than to intensify his own powers and put himself on an equal footing with the former or look with sadness at the ruins of his own industry and surrender to the mercy of his hard yoke and pay him an eternal compulsory loan from the rest of his vanishing fund."⁶⁰ How to avoid such a fate?

Like many of his contemporaries, Surowiecki links the dramatic quality of the diagnosis with a moderation in remedies. The government must proceed carefully, because prohibitions on imports or the introduction of customs duty usually cause retaliation from the other side. In order to prevent the results of foreign competition, the government can support the setting up of factories: "a factory, besides the fact that it feeds and employs many people, [...] also [...] with its charitable influence [...] brings to life other types of industry around it."⁶¹ Government subsidies, however, do not always help because as a result the nation must pay craftsmen who work with a loss. "The worldly and zealous Colbert—by a careless choice in backing one type of industry leaving the rest devoid of workhands and funds—probably caused more harm to France than Louis XIV's decades of wars."⁶²

The true way is different: sometimes "instead of entangling oneself in the deceptive reckoning of prohibition and taxes [...] governments would [...] easily heal [...] evil by establishing several schools and factories that educate young artisans, by granting certain freedoms to the craftsmen or by lightening excessive loads."⁶³ The lack of "national enlightenment" is the cause of urban decline. The government should support the inflow of foreign capital. To relocate capital from areas of its concentration to underinvested regions, one needs no more than to offer sure profits, safety and honesty." In Polish condition this "no more" was a very ambitious program.

In accordance with the title of his study, Surowiecki focuses his attention on the towns; although he writes a lot about the problems of handicrafts, his favorite hero is not an artisan but a merchant. He fulfils a great role, not only economic but also intellectual, as the mediator in assimilating new foreign ideals. Surowiecki rejected the mercantilist conviction that the development of one nation can take place only at the cost of another, and accepted the liberal view that economic development can be beneficial

for everyone through a wise economic policy preventing the destruction of national industry through competition.

I am not quite convinced by those historians who consider the work of Surowiecki the most eminent indication of the theory of initiated growth in early 19th-century Polish economic thought.⁶⁴ In it one can rather see the precursor of moderately interventionist liberalism, the concepts of which was to be developed later by John Stuart Mill, and which allowed state intervention only if individuals or voluntary associations could not cope with the assignments (subsidiarity principle).

In the ideology of the times of the Duchy of Warsaw cameralist influences and the practice of Napoleonic despotism are harmoniously connected with the liberal and freedom oriented phraseology of French Enlightenment. The paradox is only superficial. The Enlightened believed to have discovered the laws of social development. The laws of economics are "closest to those which represent exact science, mathematics," wrote Dominik Krysiński, while Antoni Gliszczyński created a surprising comparison claiming that "already the science of legislation, the art of making Nations happy, has as much certain and invariable rules, as the art of amusing people in theaters." Since the law of nature is clear and self-evident, a man will always choose the right way of behavior, namely the one closest to nature; it is obvious to all that an Enlightened government also has only one unprejudiced way of behavior. Only people of ill will can oppose; whereas the press and public opinion expressing the general will and, therefore, not subject to error, can but support the politics of the authorities.⁶⁵

Little wonder then that both the authorities of the Duchy and the Enlightened journalists used the enlightened-liberal rhetoric as the justification for bureaucratic centralization. "Governments filled with civic spirit cannot claim more days of pleasure than those which are the pleasure of the ruled"—the State Council of the Duchy of Warsaw turned with these words to the inhabitants of the provinces annexed after the war of 1809, adding that this land would be united with the rest of the Duchy "under one constitution, one uniform government and one scepter of a good and virtuous king."⁶⁶

In order to understand the genesis of Polish liberal thought, it is extremely important to realize that liberalism—or rather protoliberalism—of the Duchy of Warsaw is expressed precisely in etatism, enthusiasm for the very idea of state, and belief in the omnipotence of state administration which is bestowed with almost religious attributes. The emerging Polish

liberalism of this era found itself, broadly speaking, on the level of the English protoliberalism of Hobbes' times. It is worth remembering that for Thomas Hobbes the experience of the anarchy after the English Civil War became an important stimulus towards creating the theory of a sovereign and undivided state authority.⁶⁷ That is why comparison can be drawn with the Polish enlightened generation, on which the memory of the anarchy of the former Commonwealth induced the indelible brand. Before addressing the problem of individual liberty, Polish political thought had to assimilate notions of sovereignty, state, rule of law and administrative centralization.

This is not to say that the late Polish Enlightenment did not notice the problem of individual freedom. This problem appeared, however, in a completely different context than in the classical liberalism of the nineteenth century. The main enemy of individual liberty was the fettering "feudalism," limiting social progress or economic activity. The Enlightened Government, whilst reforming the political system, introducing equality before the law and freedom to choose an occupation, could not constitute—according to this ideology—any threat to the freedom of the individual; on the contrary, it was its main ally. In the Duchy of Warsaw the classical liberal opposition between the individual and the state did not yet exist. Unlike in classical liberalism, the public opinion (here we have the next typically Enlightenment notion), as well as the freedom of the press were not perceived as factors controlling the government. Instead, they were considered natural allies of the state in the battle against prejudice and ignorance.

"In society, the rights of man assure him liberty, equality, safety and property. When it comes to liberty, it is such that one is free to do that which is not harmful to another. As for equality, its principle is that the law prescribes justice which is equal for everyone [...]. When it comes to safety, it is a result of the co-operation of all for safeguarding the rights of everybody; ownership is a right which allows the disposition of one's own property, income, fruits of work and industry,"⁶⁸ wrote Stanisław Węgrzecki. The meaning of this undoubtedly liberal fragment shall be understood best when we notice that it immediately follows the earlier quote which praises the role of the administration in the life of the individual.

It was the advocates of the government, not its opponents, who proclaimed similar concepts. When they came up against the Diet opposition, which drew from the old traditions of nobility, then both of the sources of liberal ideology would come in contact with one another and Polish liberal-

ism would be born. The harbinger of this connection could be perceived already in the times of the Duchy of Warsaw when the former Jacobins, removed from power, backed, for tactical reasons, the old gentry opposition during the Diet of 1811,⁶⁹ despite the fact that the program of the oppositionists was in direct contrast with their own outlook. However, this opposition, directed by Józef Godlewski, a delegate from Mariampol, did not yet have ideological support in the form of modern ideals of liberalism. The meeting of both trends will therefore take place only in the constitutional Polish Kingdom.

Notes

- 1 This process is analyzed in depth in an extremely interesting book by Harold J. Berman, *Law and Revolution. The Formation of Western Legal Tradition* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1983), *passim*.
- 2 Cf. Andrzej Rapaczynski, *Nature and Politics. Liberalism in the Philosophy of Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau* (Ithaca-London: Cornell University Press, 1987); Leo Strauss, "On Natural Law," in *Studies in Platonic Political Philosophy*, ed. Thomas Pangle (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983); Norberto Bobbio, *Thomas Hobbes and the Natural Law Tradition* (Chicago-London: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 68–69.
- 3 Emanuel Rostworowski, *Historia powszechna. Wiek XVIII* (Warsaw, 1980), 619.
- 4 Benedykt Chmielowski, *Nowe Ateny* [New Athens], ed. Maria Lipska, Jan Józef Lipski (Cracow, 1968), 342–343. Cf. also Zbigniew Ogonowski, *Filozofia polityczna w Polsce XVII i tradycja demokracji europejskiej* (Warsaw: Instytut Filozofii i Socjologii PAN, 1992). A few years ago an interesting, if not entirely convincing attempt to analyze the political system of the old Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth using the conceptual framework of modern liberal-democratic societies was made by Edward Opaliński, *Kultura polityczna szlachty polskiej w latach 1587–1652. System parlamentarny a społeczeństwo obywatelskie* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, 1995).
- 5 Emanuel Rostworowski, *Ostatni król Rzeczypospolitej* (Warsaw, 1966), 20.
- 6 Seweryn Rzewuski, *O sukcesji tronu w Polsce rzecz krótka* [On hereditary monarchy in Poland, a short discourse], (s. l. & a. [not before 1789]), 26, 15, 24. On the "primitivism" of Rzewuski's thought see Zofia Zielińska, *Republikanizm spod znaku buławy* [Republicanism under the Sign of the Baton] (Warsaw 1988), 394. The serious analysis is undertaken by Andrzej Walicki, *The Enlightenment and the Birth of Modern Nationhood. Polish Political Thought from Noble Republicanism to Tadeusz Kościuszko* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989), 1–28.
- 7 Otto Hintze, *Die Hohenzollern und ihr Werk* (Berlin, 1915), 251.
- 8 Cf. Władysław Konopczyński, *Liberum Veto* (Cracow, 1918), 361; Andrzej Feliks Grabski, *Myśl historyczna polskiego oświecenia* (Warsaw, 1976), 23ff. The concept of "federation of neighborhoods" was introduced in a very interesting book by Andrzej Zajączkowski, published for the first time in 1961 as *Główne elementy kultury szlacheckiej w Polsce*. The book caused a vivid polemic, summarized by the author in the preface to the new edition: Andrzej Zajączkowski, *Szlachta Polska. Kultura i struktura* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Semper, 1993), 59–80.

- 9 Władysław Konopczyński, *Polscy pisarze polityczni* (Warsaw, 1966), 111. See also Anna Sucheni-Grabowska, "Prawa i obowiązki królów polskich w opiniach pisarzy odrodzenia," in *Między monarchią a demokracją*, ed. Anna Sucheni-Grabowska and Małgorzata Żaryn (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, 1994), 54–115 and Jan Urwanowicz, "Ideologia a działalność polityczna szlachty w czasach Zygmunta III. Wokół wartości ustrojowych," in *Między monarchią a demokracją*, 170–190.
- 10 Cf. Stanisław Grodziski, *Obywatelstwo w szlacheckiej Rzeczypospolitej* (Cracow: 1963), 103, 159 and *passim*.
- 11 The phrase *Unfertiger Zustand der Staatsbildung* was coined by the eminent German historian Otto Hintze in his article "Verfassungsgeschichte Polens vom 16. bis 18. Jahrhundert," in Hintze, *Staat und Verfassung. Gesammelte Abhandlungen zur allgemeinen Verfassungsgeschichte*, 2nd ed. (Göttingen, 1962), 516. Two other excellent essays on the specific features of the Polish 17th century polity are worth consulting as well: Tadeusz Manteuffel, "Feudalizm polski" [Polish feudalism], in Manteuffel, *Historyk wobec historii* [Historian and History] (Warsaw, 1976), 100–122, and Antoni Mączak, "Jedyna i nieporównywalna? Kwestia odrębności Rzeczypospolitej w Europie XVI–XVII wieku" [The Unique and Incomparable? Problem of Poland's Distinctiveness in Europe of 16th and 17th Centuries], *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, C (1993): 121–136. The masterly description of the old Commonwealth's political system in Michał Bobrzyński's classical work remains up till now an indispensable source of inspiration for anybody interested in the problem. See Bobrzyński, *Dzieje Polski w zarysie* [An Outline of the History of Poland] 4th ed., vol. 2 (Warsaw, 1927), 139–144.
- 12 Cf. Grabski, 20–21.
- 13 The differences between the modern theories of natural law and their predecessors are clearly exposed by Bobbio, 1–10, 149–154.
- 14 Cf. Konopczyński, *Liberum Veto*, 259–262.
- 15 *Monitor 1765–1785. Wybór* ["Monitor" 1765–1785. A Selection], ed. Elżbieta Aleksandrowska (Wrocław: Biblioteka Narodowa, 1976), 248 (no. 97 of 1769).
- 16 Stanisław Staszic, *Przestrogi dla Polski* [Warnings for Poland], ed. Stefan Czarnowski (Cracow: Biblioteka Narodowa, 1926), 10. Franciszek Peplowski, *Słownictwo i frazeologia polskiej publicystyki okresu oświecenia i romantyzmu* [The Vocabulary and Phraseology of Polish Political Journalism in the Ages of the Enlightenment and Romanticism] (Warsaw, 1961), 105–110. Janusz Maciejewski, "Pojęcie narodu w myśli republikańskiej lat 1767–1775" [The Understanding of Nationhood in the Ideas of the Polish Republicans, 1767–1775], in *Idee i koncepcje narodu w polskiej myśli politycznej czasów porobiorczych*, ed. Janusz Goćkowski and Andrzej Walicki (Warsaw, 1977). Andrzej Walicki, *The Enlightenment*, *passim*.
- 17 *Monitor*, 391 (no. 14 of 1774); 140–141 (no. 18 of 1767); 41 (no. 35 of 1765, article by Feliks Łoyko); 178–182 (no. 72 of 1767). Cf. also [F. Bohomolec?], *Respons na list imci pana Literackiego* [Reply to Mr Literacki's letter], *Monitor*, 182–185 (no. 73 of 1767).
- 18 Józef Wybiecki, *Myśli polityczne o wolności cywilnej* [Political Thoughts on Civil Liberty], ed. Zbigniew Nowak (Wrocław, 1984), 58. (First published in 1775–1776.)
- 19 Rostworowski, *Historia powszechna*, 621–625; J. L. Talmon, *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1986), 45.
- 20 Stanisław Grabski, *Zarys rozwoju idei społeczno-gospodarczych w Polsce pierwszego rozbioru do r. 1831*, vol. I: *Od pierwszego do trzeciego rozbioru* (Cracow, 1903), 56.
- 21 Cf. Jerzy Jedlicki, "Social Ideas and Economic Attitudes of the Polish Eighteenth Century Nobility," in *The Fifth International Congress of Economic History. Leningrad, 1970*, vol. I (Moscow, 1974), 89.

- 22 [Józef Epifani Minasowicz] Patryalowski [pseud.], *Salus patriae suprema lex esto*, in *Monitor*, 249 (no. 97 of 1769).
- 23 Józef Wybicki, *Listy patriotyczne* [Patriotic letters], ed. Kazimierz Opalek. Biblioteka Narodowa, Series I, no. 155 (Wrocław 1955), 255.
- 24 Staszic, 208–210.
- 25 Staszic, 192.
- 26 Hugo Kollataj, *Listy Anonima i Prawo polityczne narodu polskiego* [Anonymous Letters and Political Law of the Polish Nation], ed. Bogusław Leśnodorski and Helena Wereszycka, vol. I–II. (Warsaw, 1954). This reference: Kollataj, vol. I, 278.
- 27 Kollataj, vol. II, 34.
- 28 Pełowski, *Słownictwo*, 56–57.
- 29 Kollataj, vol. II, 13.
- 30 Kollataj, vol. II, 45.
- 31 Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay, *The Federalist, or the New Constitution* (London–New York: Everyman's Library, 1942).
- 32 Grodziski, *Obywatelstwo*, 178, 185–186; Jerzy Jedlicki, *Klejnot i bariery społeczne* (Warsaw, 1970), 183–207.
- 33 Marcei Handelsman, “Ideologia polityczna Towarzystwa Republikańców Polskich, 1798–1807” [Political Ideology of the Society of Polish Republicans, 1798–1807], in Handelsman, *Rozwój narodowości nowoczesnej* (Warsaw, 1973), 111–196. (With the text of the *Pre-social Contract*.)
- 34 *Korespondencja w materiach obraz kraju i narodu polskiego rozjaśniających* [Correspondence in Matters Elucidating the View of the Polish Land and Nation] (Warsaw, 1807), 161 (Gliszczyński to Szaniawski). Cf. also Wacław Tokarz, *Ostatnie lata Hugona Kollataja, 1794–1812* (Cracow, 1905), vol. I, 272–275, 331–334. On the ideas of the moderate followers of late Enlightenment cf. Tomasz Kizwalter, *Kryzys Oświecenia a początki konserwatyzmu polskiego* (Warsaw, 1987) and Jerzy Michalski, *Z dziejów Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Nauk* (Warsaw, 1953).
- 35 [Hugo Kollataj], *Uwagi nad teraźniejszym położeniem tej części ziemi polskiej, którą od pokoju tylżyckiego zaczęto zwać Księstwem Warszawskim* [Remarks on the present state of this part of the Polish Lands, that after the Peace of Tilsit was called Duchy of Warsaw] (Leipzig, 1808), 180–182.
- 36 *Korespondencja w materiach*, 214 (Rembieliński to Szaniawski); [Kollataj], *Uwagi*, 213.
- 37 [Kollataj], *Uwagi*, 127.
- 38 Stanisław Węgrzecki, *Rozprawa o profesjach i profesjonalistach* [On Professions and Professionals] (Warsaw, 1810), 189–192.
- 39 Antoni Gliszczyński, *Uwagi nad dochodami publicznymi* [Remarks on Public Incomes] (sine loco, 1810), 6. The reading list was published by *Gazeta Bydgoska*, 26 February 1810, 16.
- 40 Jan Paweł Harl, *Nauka policji* [The Science of Police], transl. by Antoni Gliszczyński (Bydgoszcz, 1811).
- 41 Stanisław Węgrzecki, *O włościanach polskich* [On the Polish Peasants] (Warsaw, 1814), 6–7, 9. Cf. also [Kollataj], *Uwagi*, 201–203.
- 42 *Korespondencja w materiach*, 251–253 (Kaulfus to Szaniawski).
- 43 *Korespondencja w materiach*, 61 (Gliszczyński to Szaniawski).
- 44 Tadeusz Mencel, *Feliks Lubieński* (Warsaw, 1952), 67. Cf. also Handelsman, “Próba wprowadzenia u nas francuskiego kodeksu karnego” [Attempts at Introducing the French Penal Code to Poland], in Handelsman, *Pod znakiem Napoleona* (Warsaw, n.d.), 148–149.
- 45 See interesting remarks in [Kollataj], *Uwagi*, 111–112 (footnote 23).

- 46 *Korespondencja w materiach*, 231–242.
- 47 [Ignacy Raczyński], *Sześćioletnia korespondencja władz duchownych z rządem świeckim Księstwa Warszawskiego* [Six Years of Correspondence between the Ecclesiastical Authorities and the Secular Government of the Duchy of Warsaw] (Warsaw, 1816), 300–305.
- 48 *Sześćioletnia korespondencja*, 342.
- 49 *Sześćioletnia korespondencja*, 249–255.
- 50 *Sześćioletnia korespondencja*, 12.
- 51 *Sześćioletnia korespondencja*, 15.
- 52 *Sześćioletnia korespondencja*, 97.
- 53 *Korespondencja w materiach*, 143 (Krysiński to Szaniawski). Smith was recommended by Gliszczyński, too; see *Korespondencja w materiach*, 162.
- 54 *Korespondencja w materiach*, 16 (Gliszczyński to Szaniawski).
- 55 [Kollataj], *Uwagi*, 194.
- 56 Gliszczyński, *Uwagi nad dochodami*, 14.
- 57 *Korespondencja w materiach*, 90 (Podoski to Szaniawski). Similar opinions appear in Staszic, *Przestrogi dla Polski*, 116–117.
- 58 *Korespondencja w materiach*, 95–96 (Krysiński to Gliszczyński).
- 59 Wawrzyniec Surowiecki, “O upadku przemysłu i miast w Polsce” [On the Collapse of Industry and Towns in Poland], in Surowiecki, *Wybór pism* [Selected writings], ed. by J. Krzywicka and A. Łukaszewicz (Warsaw, 1957), 33–246.
- 60 Surowiecki, 83.
- 61 Surowiecki, 98.
- 62 Surowiecki, 97.
- 63 Surowiecki, 90–91.
- 64 Such was the opinion of Janusz Górski, *Polska myśl ekonomiczna a rozwój gospodarczy, 1807–1830* (Warsaw, 1963), 180.
- 65 *Korespondencja w materiach*, 144, 129. On similar developments in contemporary France see Talmon, *Origins*, 36.
- 66 Published in *Gazeta Bydgoska*, no. 3, 11 January 1810.
- 67 Bobbio, 29–30.
- 68 Węgrzecki, *Rozprawa o profesjach*, 192.
- 69 See Tokarz, *Ostatnie lata*, vol. II, 221; Mencil, *Feliks Łubieński*, 182–183; and Jerzy Skowronek, “Skład społeczny i polityczny sejmów Księstwa Warszawskiego i Królestwa Kongresowego,” *Przegląd Historyczny*, 3 (1961): 472.

CHAPTER 2

The Rise and Decline of Enlightened Liberality

The creation of a constitutional Polish Kingdom (1815) does not entail a fundamental watershed in the history of Polish thought. The new Kingdom, as proclaimed in Article I of the Treaty of Vienna, was “united irrevocably with the Russian Empire by its constitution.” It would embrace most of the land of the former Duchy, without the departments of Poznań and Bydgoszcz, and without Cracow from which a free town was formed. Even so it was larger than the Duchy had been before 1809, and the attitude of Czar Alexander I allowed the hope that the eastern lands of the former Commonwealth—which, with Adam Czartoryski as the supervisor of the Wilno Educational District, was enjoying a period of cultural blossoming—would be included. The political elite of the Kingdom professed to the same late Enlightenment ideals which dominated earlier in the Duchy of Warsaw. In order to describe their *Weltanschauung*, they received in a most appropriate moment a completely new word: liberalism.

The earliest to appear—already in 1815—was the adjective “liberal,” soon followed by the noun “liberality” and finally by “liberalism.” Writing about modern administration, Rajmund Rembieliński described in 1815 the administrative reforms of Frederick the Great as “liberal.” Such a use of the word did not mean a change of views—the ideal of Rembieliński continued to be an enlightened, centralized bureaucratic state. If he now described his old idea with the term “liberal,” then we can suppose that this fashionable word had some connection to enlightened and modern ideas but was not as yet fully defined.¹

In 1818 Stanisław Węgrzecki used the word “liberality” in a way that left no doubt that it expressed his own views. In 1821 he expressed ideas completely akin to what was at the time considered “liberal views,” although without using the actual phrase. “I would like us to enjoy liberty without frivolity, to worship Religion without fanaticism, to be [...] politically equal

without debauchery, ruled by a monarch but without despotism, to follow laws without slavery.”²

Old views influenced the shape of this enlightened liberalism, many of its advocates were inclined to emphasize the tasks of an enlightened government giving happiness to the subjects, rather than the individual rights of safeguards against abuses of the state power. The official reports of the Council of State, which were presented to the delegates of the 1818 and 1820 Diets, are full of enlightened phraseology: they emphasize the role of education, the importance of religious tolerance, as well as the “independence of courts, the only guarantee of freedom,” which safeguards “freedom and personal safety for everyone.” At the same time, however, this liberalism had a most paternalist character: the government had as its aim the good “of its people, who are unable as yet to understand the good intentions that the government is bestowing on them.” The political phraseology had not changed since the times of the Duchy of Warsaw.³

The French and German ideals, so influential in the Polish Enlightenment, had now been overshadowed by another pattern that had existed before 1815 but had never dominated: that of England. It was an example of connecting freedom with order and, moreover, it attained economic prosperity. It also provided a new philosophy: British empiricism and especially the Scottish Philosophy of Common Sense became the basis of the late Polish Enlightenment. Its propagators were University Professors, Jan Śniadecki in Wilno and Krystyn Lach-Szyrma in Warsaw. The latter is also the author of the most precise description of Great Britain in contemporary Polish literature.

Liberal ideas were spread by freemasonry which grouped most of the Polish enlightened elite; in the first years after the Congress of Vienna it counted 4,000 members in 32 lodges, to which should be added 1,000 members in the Ruthenian and Lithuanian territories annexed to the Russian Empire⁴—it was, therefore, by the standards of the times, almost a mass movement.

Etatist liberalism did not have to be presented in the version of the former Jacobins; it could also appear in a slightly different shade, with some influence of British traditions. In January 1816 the *Pamiętnik Warszawski* (Warsaw Diary)—a serious monthly linked closely with the Warsaw Society of the Friends of Learning, and modeled on British magazines and reviews, notably on *The Edinburgh Review*, an organ of Whig opposition—published an anonymous article (the author might have been the Minister of Religious Belief and Public Enlightenment Stanisław Kostka Potocki), entitled

“What is the Meaning of Liberal Views?” This publication is sometimes considered to mark the beginning of Polish liberalism. It, therefore, deserves to be looked at more closely.⁵

“For over a year,” the author begins, “a new slogan has battered our ears. ‘Liberal views’.” According to some, it is “a revolutionary expression,” whereas according to others, it means simply “reasonable views [...] regardless of the name” under which they are known in history. “The new political meaning given to the word ‘liberal’ comes from the Latin where *liberalis* meant worthy of a free man.”

In a longer argument the author reconstructs the classical meaning of the adjective *liberalis*. “Terence, Plato and Cicero describe a noble and polite countenance, a person of good birth as ‘*liberalis facies*,’ ‘*species*,’ ‘*forma*.’ [...] Cicero gives liberal traits to a variety of things whose common source is the epitome of a careful education and independent means. According to him, liberal is he who dresses beautifully but modestly; whose face shows joy but openness; who willingly serves and pleases others; who is more inclined to see good rather than bad traits in others.” The meaning is somehow connected with the term *studia liberalia* depicting those fields of knowledge which “show their diligent students a more noble aim of life above personal interest.” Such studies “bloom only in nations that have a taste of more or less civil and political liberty.”

This brings us to politics. “Political views are liberal when they are in agreement with the moral aim of the existence of man, when they favor development and the perfection of our intellectual powers, when they aim to assure freedom and laws of the whole society against an unlawful might of individuals [...]; when their intention is [...] the public good, not the particular good of private persons or of one class; when they arouse magnanimous, elevated and patriotic feelings and do not feed on vanity, greed and weakness; when they are worthy not of a courtier [...], but of a citizen of a state and an active and independent member of a political family. [...] A liberal government allows resistance, that is to say, opposition; moreover, it demands it because, firstly, only open resistance shows that there is political freedom; and secondly, the quarrels of Ministers with the opposition uncover the mistakes of the former and allow the government to see the state of public spirit”.

The associations with the adjective “liberal” revolved around the Latin etymology of the word and the medieval notion of liberal arts. The elitism of the above pattern is clear; this pattern comes from the ancient tradition filtered mostly through English Enlightenment: a “liberal” person is de-

scribed in English with the words “*gentleman, gentlewoman*, the meaning of which is impossible to express in other languages [...] *Gentlemanly appearance* corresponds to the Latin *liberalis facies*.” The adjective “liberal” in French “has the appearance of English, such as *jury, budget, two Chambers*.”

Just like the Polish ex-Jacobins, the author renounces any affinity with the “atheist [...] follower of Voltaire” or the “anarchist,” who “boasts of proclaiming liberal principles to the world, and [...] often does not have any principles himself. A liberal government shuns from honoring these fools with a mark of persecution.” The author criticizes the French Revolution which, “under the slogan of liberty,” sent to the scaffold “a monarch, the greatest friend of liberty.” The liberalism of this text differs from the liberalism of the former Jacobins through its faith in the benefits of political opposition, as well as through the eulogy of the idea of a gentleman, which Węgrzecki or Kołłątaj would certainly perceive as a dangerous tendency towards the “exclusivism” of the higher classes.

Does this mean that we can differentiate several trends in the liberal thought of the Kingdom? One could divide them into the “Jacobin” trend aiming towards centralization and uniformity, and the more moderate trend, closer to the anti-centralist tradition of the gentry. Another division (which does not correspond with the previous one) would run between oppositional liberals and the pro-government group; the former emphasizes the meaning of the rule of law, the latter—the necessity of the construction of modern state institutions. Among the more moderate, “non-Jacobin” liberals, one could perhaps count several veterans of the late eighteenth-century reforms: Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz or senator Józef Wybicki, maybe also Stanisław Kostka Potocki, Minister of Religious Belief and Public Enlightenment in the years between 1815 and 1820.

The differences, however, are not clear-cut and most of the Enlightened generation obviously belonged—irrespective of any differences—to the same mental formation. Polish “liberal views” were as yet too ambiguous, and our knowledge of the political thought of the Polish Kingdom is too general to wage a fully systematic picture, but the lack of uniformity of liberal thought of that time is worth noting.

The political history of the constitutional Polish Kingdom very clearly breaks up into two periods, with a turning point around 1820. Prior to this, a mood of friendly expectation and the hope of a new order dominated. After this, the atmosphere began to change and the politics of the Great Powers shifted to conservatism. The situation in Germany testified to

this, as did the suppression—with French help—of revolutionary movements in Spain and in Italy. Even in England the brutal suppression of the workers' demonstration (the Peterloo Massacre, 1819) seemed to indicate a threat to liberty from the governing conservatives.

In the Polish Kingdom, the new politics was inaugurated by limiting and then abolishing the freedom of speech. The introduction of the censorship of the press (1819) hit above all the liberal paper *Gazeta Codzienna* published in Warsaw by Bruno Kiciński. Kiciński next took up the publication of the *Kronika drugiej połowy roku 1819* (Chronicle in the second half of 1819) which took the guise of a non-periodical publication, and being forced to close it, he published it for another few months—now under censorship—as *Orzeł Biały* (The White Eagle). This magazine was closed by the authorities in 1820. The liberal press included also *Dekada Polska* (The Polish Decade), published in the first three months of 1820 by Franciszek Grzymała (10 issues were published), and the *Sybilla Nadwiślańska* (The Vistula Oracle), also issued in the first quarter of 1820. The closure of these magazines and the widening of the censorship to include non-periodical publications (1820) marked the end of a short blossoming of the press published by the young liberal intelligentsia. In 1822 the *Pamiętnik Warszawski*, which first appeared in 1815, was also closed.

In the lands annexed to the Russian Empire right away, a sign of the new policy was the forced dismissal of Prince Adam Czartoryski from the position of supervisor of the Wilno Education District, in connection with the discovery of the secret youth organizations (*filomaci* and *filareci*). In 1822 the *Wiadomości brukowe* (Street News), a satirical paper in the liberal and enlightened spirit published in Wilno from 1816, was discontinued. One of the important elements of the conservative politics was the delegatization of Freemasonry by Alexander I (1822).

After 1820 it is difficult to speak of governmental liberalism. Stanisław Kostka Potocki, dismissed from the position of minister, died in 1822, and some of the former radicals (Gliszczyński, Węgrzecki, Krysiński) would begin to come closer to liberal opposition. Those who preferred to keep distance from radicalism in any form could only act in the domesticated opposition of cafe-houses and salons. Here Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz played the first fiddle. The increasing conservatism of the authorities of the Kingdom did not necessarily have to mean a change in the official ideology. This ideology was not influenced by the evolving conservative thought (whose enthusiast was the former Jacobin Józef Kalasanty Szaniawski) which was somewhat linked with new ideas of romanticism.⁶ The reports of

the Council of State about the situation of the country, presented at the Diets of 1825 and 1830, are much less ideological than two earlier reports from 1818 and 1820—nevertheless, they also revolve around enlightened ideas, although there is more paternalism than liberalism about them.

The Diets of the Kingdom became the arenas of opposition in the strict political sense, directed by the so-called Kalisz group. It was formed by gentry from the western part of the Polish Kingdom, and led by the brothers Bonawentura and Wincenty Niemojowski. Whilst trying to explain the phenomenon, historians tend to draw attention to the relatively flourishing economy in the region. This, in turn, could be explained by the close contacts with the neighboring territories of the more highly developed Prussian partition. Kalisz—"the second city after the capital [...] crowded and flourishing,"⁷ "took Warsaw as its model [...] and does not sway one step from this example." "Here in Kalisz, as in Warsaw," proudly wrote a correspondent to a Warsaw newspaper, the streets are being tidied and ramshackle buildings demolished, charitable organizations and municipal societies are being established, the "beautiful and orderly building" of the town hospital has been erected, and the new residence of a recently established bishopric is adding to the splendor of the town.⁸ The local nobility had close contacts with the Prussian partition and farmed in a more modern way than the nobility in other regions of the Kingdom. Besides the Niemojowski brothers, Alojzy Prosper Biernacki, the well-known promulgator of English agronomic concepts should be mentioned. Some of the former radicals, such as Antoni Gliszczyński and Stanisław Węgrzecki sympathized with the Kalisz Group.

Jerzy Skowronek discerned four types of informal groupings of opposition in the Diets of the Kingdom. The most prominent among them was the traditional gentry opposition deriving from the times of the Duchy of Warsaw. In the Diets of 1818 and 1820 it was still led by Józef Godlewski (the authorities did not allow his election in 1825 and 1830). Not only was the Kalisz Group far from being the only opposition but they did not even form the majority amongst the oppositionists. They were, however, the best organized and they alone were able to create a complex political ideology.⁹

The liberal opposition appeared already at the Diet in 1818, which, however, passed in an atmosphere of thankfulness to the Czar—"the Restorer of Poland"—and of hope for a quick incorporation of the Lithuanian and Ruthenian lands into the Kingdom. The greatest activity of the Kalisz Group was shown in the Diet of 1820, at which, amongst other things, they accused Stanisław Kostka Potocki of signing the unconstitutional decree

introducing censorship. The Diet ended in an atmosphere of conflict between the Chamber and the monarch: Alexander (against the constitution) did not summon the Diet until 1825, at which time the authorities of the Kingdom did not allow the Niemojowskis to take part in the debates. The Provincial Council of the Kalisz voivodship—an organ of local autonomy—was also dissolved. The new monarch, Nicholas I tried to better the relationship with the Polish society, the proof of which was his separate coronation in Warsaw (1928) and the calling of the Diet in 1830. This time too it was made impossible for the Niemojowskis to take part in the work of the Chambers.

For the Kalisz Group the ideal of a political system was “a monarchic-representative government, the most honorable, most useful discovery of human reason.”¹⁰ According to the well-known English maxim, in such a system “the king can do no wrong”: all his decisions must be countersigned by the ministers, which make them—and not the monarch—responsible before the Diet. The king, however, has a decisive veto—his consent, just as the consent of both Chambers of Parliament, is indispensable for the establishment of a new law.

The Kalisz Group, as legalists, attached great importance to the organization of the judiciary and its independence. “Every citizen should be judged by his equals, that is, by other citizens. [...] A man, who judges me, should in turn be able to be judged by me”—this reasoning, deriving from the Middle Ages, lies at the basis of the institution of the trial by jury, whose basis is the “necessity of a separate judgement about the facts and a separate judgement about the law.” Anyone with a common sense can decide whether an act was committed, whereas a professional lawyer is needed only in order to impose a punishment prescribed by the law.¹¹

The second basis of political liberty is the freedom of press. “England, which had used freedom of press for 130 years, was often in a difficult situation during this time. Twice it saw its own dynasty being threatened by a civil and a foreign war [...] the whole social order in danger; in these dreadful moments it often suspended personal freedom, this most precious element of civil society, but it never weakened the freedom of press—it is obvious that using this freedom is harmless, it heals wounds which it has instilled.”¹² Lastly, the third foundation is the personal freedom.

All characteristics of a good political system come together: “political freedom cannot exist without personal freedom and freedom of press; and these cannot exist without a trial by jury”.¹³

The Kalisz Group was situated within a wide trend of “enlightened

liberality” and they shared many views with the representatives of the elite of the Kingdom. Various concepts of their ideology look as though they are taken wholesale from the West—and are, in reality, adopted from there, but not so much by the Kalisz Group as by their Polish liberal predecessors. Ideas about the trial by jury, evidently deriving from England and France, were already presented very similarly by Józef Wybicki in his *Zbiór myśli politycznych o rządzie reprezentacyjnym* (A Collection of Political Thoughts about Representative Government) (1819), and also sketched by the journalism of that epoch. Prince Adam Czartoryski in the Senate of the Polish Kingdom in 1818 outlined the role of a constitutional monarch who does not accept responsibility for his acts, but is removed from the practical function of governing, in a manner similar to Wincenty Niemojowski in the text quoted above. It is difficult to find in the Kalisz Group a concept not proclaimed in Poland by someone else in the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

The basic foundations of Enlightenment thought were common to all trends of Polish liberalism after the Congress of Vienna: rationalism as a style of thinking, belief in gradual progress and the final victory of reason, freedom and justice. The term “progress” understood as social development that is directed to a certain goal and independent from the will of individuals. These had not yet acquired a status in the Polish language; the idea itself, however, did exist: when “the spirit of the time” and its requirements were written about, such “objectivized” development was meant.¹⁴ The periodicals of Kiciński, Grzymała and their associates are full of hope for the quick success of liberalism in the whole world. Reports from Spain, Germany and Italy informed of the consecutive successes of liberty. Most hope was awoken by the fall of colonialism in Latin America.

“The moment long awaited by the Friends of mankind is approaching. [...] Liberty spreads its rule to the Southern Hemisphere. [...] Just as the Northern Americans do, their southern brothers wish to live in liberty and independence; they wish to cast away [...] the yoke of inquisition. Enlightened Europe unites its wishes with the wishes of America; and England, that land where liberty rules for many centuries, has rightly been called the hearth of liberty, England supports the efforts of Independence by all possible means.”¹⁵

The feeling of being the vanguard of the victorious rationalism mixed in the liberals with the pessimistic conviction that they had to defend reason against the overwhelming ignorance. Throughout the nineteenth century both attitudes competed with one another, it seems, however, that up to the

1880's the optimistic attitude grows in strength. The unfavorable political events, such as the conservative revival in Europe around 1820 or the collapse of the 1848 Revolution could weaken this optimism only for a very short time.

In spite of the declared gradualism, the Polish liberals could not rid themselves of a certain sympathy for the French revolution, although they criticized its abuses. Evil has already happened, and the blessed fruits of the revolution, in the form of spreading the ideas of liberty, remain and "we must guard them all the more so, as it cost the people dearly." If Pierre Manent is to be believed, all European liberals felt similarly at the end of the eighteenth and in the nineteenth century.¹⁶

The liberals of the Kingdom acknowledged the constitutional monarchy as the best of political systems. To be sure, obligatory admiration of the emperor and king Alexander I formed a kind of ideological compulsory tribute; nevertheless, the belief in the advantages of a constitutional monarchy was sincere. During the November uprising, which banned censorship, Wincenty Niemojowski wrote that while theoretically "freedom can exist just as well under a republican government as under a monarchical one," in practice, however, the "republican system" is impossible to apply.¹⁷

The liberals were mostly advocates of the separation of powers. Doubts existed as to whether a judiciary power was separate from an executive one. W. Niemojowski counted—as did Benjamin Constant—as much as five powers, adding monarchy and local government to executive, legislative and judiciary powers. Acknowledging the monarchy and the nation as equals, the liberals rejected both the doctrine of the sovereignty of the nation and the doctrine of monarchic absolutism. Pierre Manent supposes that the idea of the separation of powers could be born only in a specific moment in history, when the idea of monarchic absolutism was buried by the Glorious Revolution in England, whilst the French Revolution did not as yet proclaim the doctrine of popular sovereignty. The problem of legitimizing the state power was therefore suspended and political thought could occupy itself with the planning of a political system that left most room for the freedom of the individual.

This is not entirely convincing because the concept of the separation of powers is earlier and derives from the late Middle Ages and early modern "estate dualism;" nevertheless, the atmosphere described by Manent could have in reality made this concept more popular. In the constitutional Polish Kingdom the principle of the sovereignty of the nation understood as

the noble estate had already fallen, whilst the principle of royal absolutism had never existed in Polish political thought, and the modern principle of the popular sovereignty had not yet been accepted. The place was open for the doctrine of the separation of powers.

The acknowledgement of the equality of the “king” and the “nation” in the liberal thought of the Kingdom was not therefore an element of tactics, but comprised an important component of the European liberal thought. In the 1820s such an attitude slowly began to be an anachronism in the constitutional monarchies of the West where the “nation” gained a decided superiority over the “monarchy.” However, in the Central European monarchies the “Crown” retained an independent position—not only in practical politics, but also in liberal thought—up to the end of the nineteenth century; if this signifies certain backwardness in political theory, then Poland was not alone.

In an interesting study, the Hungarian historian László Péter showed how much Hungarian liberal thought in the 60s of the nineteenth century (even that of Deák himself) was still stuck in the late-Medieval categories of the estates that deal with their sovereign on an equal basis.¹⁸ If things were similar with the liberals in the Kingdom, this would mean that their thought was much more archaic and distanced from the western models than it would seem. Any conclusive opinion in this matter would, however, require a detailed comparative study.

Not all the contemporary Polish liberals would have agreed with the words of one Warsaw aristocrat ridiculed by Adam Mickiewicz in one of his poems: “The aristocracy is always the support of freedom, take as an example Great Britain.” While Bruno Kiciński always signed his publications as “Count,” his article in the *Orzeł Biały* denounced the nobility and the aristocracy as a false friend of the monarchy, and advised the monarchs to rely on the loyalty of the people¹⁹—incidentally, most of the monarchies of Europe at least partly followed this advice which allowed them to retain their position throughout the whole of the middle class dominated nineteenth century.

The liberal oppositionists of the Kingdom showed great interest in the theory of law as a system of norms regulating social relationships. “A person is allowed to do everything which the law does not prohibit him from doing,” and “that which the law does not prohibit, is allowed”—we find these classical formulae in the columns of *Orzeł Biały*.²⁰ They also concerned themselves with criminal procedure from the angle of safeguarding the rights of the individual: here, similarly as in the case of the trial by

jury, England was seen as the example to be followed. Such an approach to the legal problems was entirely foreign to many of the enlightened generation, who in the legalism of the oppositional liberals perceived only brawling. For the “etatist” trend the final guarantee of order and progress was the government, whereas the law was perceived as the tool of modernization from above, not as an aim in itself. Stanisław Węgrzecki, himself a lawyer, asked: “Can the people who are governed ask the legislators on what basis the law is determined? Of course not. It is not up to those who are governed to set the boundaries to the governing authority and to consider as usurpation that which does not please them in the government.” This could only happen “in the old government of Poland, or rather in lack of government.” No one can break the law invoking conscience because the “first duty of conscience is to follow the law [...]. When the authority utters something, and the citizen, under some pretext, refuses obedience, he is seen as a rebel and should be punished.”

“The dynamism of the Government pacifies impudence,” such an aphorism ends an article published by a liberal in an opposition magazine that was to be banned by censorship in a few weeks! This brings to mind the doctrine of legal positivism that was to appear some decades later. There was, however, one important difference: contrary to the proponents of legal positivism, Węgrzecki, similarly to the whole enlightened generation, believed in the law of nature, so his declarations are in reality less sinister than would seem: the law of nature, the basis of every statute law, does not permit state authorities to introduce a law which is non-beneficial to citizens or contradictory to their true will.

These general maxims served Węgrzecki to prove that in the matter of civil marriages canon law must fall in line with state law, and a secular divorce must automatically signify the church annulment of marriage. Węgrzecki, and many others, saw no difference between the French concept of the separation of the Church and state and the Josephinist concept of the subordination of the Church to state authorities. In his opinion the Napoleonic Code introduces the same laws in the matter of marriages as those formerly “introduced by civil law in the German Catholic state of Joseph II”—and, after all, “the world admits that Joseph II, faithful to the true religion, eradicated superstition, laziness, greed and idleness so harmful to the Church, and indecently hiding under the cloak of religion.”²¹

An anonymous author in *Dekada Polska* criticized the work *About clerical authority* as “a relic from Gothic times,” for the view, amongst other things, “that clerical authority is separate from civil authority.” Such a

view “lessens [...] the highest authority as defined in the constitution, article 12 of which reads: The clergy of all faiths is under the protection and supervision of laws and of government.”²²

Aiming at the subordination of the Church to the state, the liberals usually tried to refer to Christian values, emphasizing that “liberality and education are the mothers of all social virtues and they are a stronger support to religion than fanaticism and superstition. [...] Liberality does not have a more basic principle than those hundred times more holy words of the Gospel ‘Love your neighbor above yourself; do not do unto him what you would not want him to do unto you.’ Whoever strives to be liberal, ought to recall these words in all his action, and doubtless will be liberal.”²³ At the same time, in the spirit of the tradition of the Enlightenment, they liked to speak of “virtue” and “morality” rather than of religion as the foundation of social life. Aiming at the creation of lay ethics, liberal thought formed it along the lines of Christian morality, as if striving to show that lay morality can be equally fundamental and rigorous as the one based on religion.

The liberals always differentiated law from morality, which does not mean a denial of the latter; if they acknowledged something to be legally permissible, this does not follow that they necessarily thought it morally commendable. They considered only that the law should not invade certain areas.²⁴ They did not therefore proclaim a revolution in morality; the matter of lay morality constituted only the margin of their interests up to the beginning of the twentieth century. Instead, with real fervor they propagated new social and economic concepts and in these fields they really aimed at revolutionizing social mentality.

“Without education there cannot be freedom, without freedom education progresses slowly”²⁵—everyone of the contemporary liberals in Europe could subscribe to this creed from the Brussels periodical, *Le vrai liberal*, quoted by the *Kronika drugiej połowy roku 1819*. However, whilst the “oppositionist” liberals considered the popularization of the principles of a liberal state and of civil rights as a basic necessity (amongst the elite rather than the general population), the “pro-government” liberals were not interested in setting society against the government; they aimed rather at a general change of attitude in the spirit of enlightened rationalism and at a fight against prejudice. Stanisław Kostka Potocki, as Minister of Enlightenment did a lot in this direction. Much of his work, however, was ruined by his conservative successor after 1820. In his dreams he saw an ideal school “in which the vicar and the organist were the teachers, [...] whilst the parish priest was the caretaker. Apart from reading, writing and arith-

metic, only the catechism and morals were taught in this school.”²⁶ Even such an ideal was for the too radical conservatives.

It is difficult to speak of an economic theory that was common to all liberals: the only thing they all agreed on was the necessity to overcome backwardness. The division into advocates of etatism and economic freedom does not at all coincide with other divisions within contemporary liberal thought. The leading liberal economist, professor of the Warsaw University, Fryderyk Skarbek worked out a program of spontaneous economic development competing with the interventionist concepts of Surowiecki. Skarbek, following Adam Smith, considered that the natural route of development runs from agriculture through the development of crafts to the creation—on the country’s own strength, without the use of external capital—of national industry. England and France turned away from this type of development which had its repercussions in the growth of pauperism. Mass poverty can, however, be avoided if industry is not artificially built up before the accumulation of national capital.²⁷

Such a theory could count on popularity amongst the nobility who proclaimed the idea of a cheap state and were convinced that “constitutional governments should accept liberal *laissez faire* as one of their principles.”²⁸ All the same, even Skarbek was against government savings at all costs. He was seconded by a certain Wawrzyniec Mirecki who warned against “apparent saving”: “If, for example, the government deducted a considerable part of a clerks’ pay but the clerk, in turn, would demand pay for his activities from private citizens, the Citizen would bear a greater loss than if a double tax were to be put on him.” Mirecki justified his own idea of progressive tax in an interesting way: obviously for a person with a yearly income of 20 000 zlotys a tax of 2000 zlotys means less than a tax of 20 zlotys for a person who earns 200 zlotys, a year.²⁹ Does this not already sound like an early intuition of the later theory of diminishing marginal utility?

Voices were also heard which—under the unquestionable influence of cameralist tradition—demanded active economic politics. “Already, with the help of the Government, handicrafts are being created,” announced Bruno Kiciński joyfully and called for the establishment, under “the protection of the Government,” of factories of “thick wool, linen and paper”³⁰ (and so, let us add, items of everyday use, not luxury goods). An anonymous author calling for the establishment of a bank emitting banknotes went so far as to urge the government to confiscate “gold and silver dishes” in order to strengthen the “initial fund” of the planned bank (“Dear Correspondent, please remind yourself,” the *Dekada Polska* restrained him in a

footnote, “that Article 159 of the Constitution states that the penalty of confiscation has been abolished and cannot be called back under any circumstances.”)³¹

From the liberal circles there came deliberations about the modernization of agriculture: here the main authority was Alojzy Prosper Biernacki. The peasant question, however, was not considered a major problem. In principle it was believed that the constitution of the Duchy, by acknowledging equality before the law, had solved the matter—although some liberals regretted the passing of the old ways. The editors of *Orzeł Biały*, while duly applauding the abolition of the personal subjection of peasantry (“Thanks to the magnanimous Monarch! Thanks to the liberal Constitution!”), deplored the fact that personal freedom of the peasants had caused a rise in labor prices, and, in turn, in the price of grain; so that cheaper grain from Lithuania (where serfdom remained unchanged) created competition with the local grain in the markets of the Kingdom.³² Typical, it would seem, was the standpoint of Rajmund Rembieliński. For the idea of a compulsory franchise on the Prussian model, he had only words of condemnation and proposed the establishment of a peasants’ bank by the government, which would grant credit to the peasants for the purchase of the lands they farmed on at market value.

Dominik Krysiński took up a specific position, being the only delegate who in the noble Diets of the Kingdom “could be acknowledged as the political spokesman of the anti-feudal class interests of the urban population.”³³ During the Diet of 1818 he fervently opposed the project of moratorium for unpaid debts of the gentry, considering it to be “one of the greatest calamities that could strike the nation [...]. Capital is the soul of national wealth [...]. Let us look closely at England, what wonders is she able to achieve by the help of the leverage of national wealth! But let us see how capital is respected there. Today, in this Chamber, I heard, not without surprise, how hideously the capitalists were depicted. They were called warehouse keepers, users, egoists, they, who through their savings and due to their continuous endeavors to amass capital, are the benefactors and the only support of national industry. The rights of capitalists are holy. [...] Land income is for agriculturalists, the same as percentage interest is for capitalists; it is their income, their way of feeding themselves and their families. To assault this allowance is to submit the capitalist to poverty, to despair. The interest should be faithfully paid.”³⁴

Similar praise of the capitalist as the motor of economic development very rarely appeared amongst the Polish liberals. Krysiński clearly says that from

the moral point of view the capitalist's profit (that is to say, the percentage from capital) is no worse than the income of landed gentry from farming. Even for many noble liberals this had to be a revolutionary statement because in Poland throughout the nineteenth century there were many advocates of the physiocratic view emphasizing that the true production occurs only in agriculture, and the whole field of industry and finance is, in essence, its parasite. In the first quarter of the nineteenth century, Krysiński, placing the capitalist far higher than the agriculturalist, was isolated.

In the first half of the nineteenth century the Jewish question was generally considered as one of the socio-economic questions (only in the latter part of the century did it begin to be treated as part of the national problem). The analogy with the peasant question is clear, the problem was similar in both cases: how to create conscious Poles out of a separate estate. The final aim for most liberals was the assimilation of Jews into Polish society; in practice, however, many of them considered that at the moment the aim should be to limit harmful consequences which seemed to result from the occupational structure of the Jews.

The article by Stanisław Staszic "O przyczynach szkodliwości Żydów" (On the reasons of the harmfulness of Jews), published in April 1816 in the *Pamiętnik Warszawski* was one of the most damning. Staszic never admitted being a liberal, but his views can be recognized as typical for his Enlightened contemporaries. "The Jews are the cause of the great misfortunes of the Polish nation," they get the peasants drunk and they are the cause of poverty in the towns, and "all the reasons for this ill can be found in the fact that this people systematically excludes itself from other nations." The liberals could agree with all this: they also saw "exclusion" as the main reason for all social unhappiness. However, texts referring to Jews often contained—and this is true that of Staszic, probably even more than of the others—an overload of aggression and aversion which could not be rationally explained by enlightened care for the cohesion of the country and the uniformity of the administration. Anti-Jewish bias was dressed up as the modern care for progress, rationality and economic development.

The recommendations of Staszic did not completely agree with his diagnosis: Jews should not be allowed to acquire land, they should be settled in demarcated living areas in towns and only then can the government start with Polonization "from above." The integrating activity is therefore balanced by a tendency towards separation. Staszic was not the only one: "Jews can be tolerated in Christian states, but they never have the right to demand that they should be admitted generally and unconditionally to the

complete use of civil rights,” at most “only gradually and one by one,” wrote an anonymous journalist.³⁵ *Orzeł Biały* informed that in France a book had come out *On the danger of admitting Jews to using public laws and of ways of changing them into Citizens in a Constitutional State*, bemoaning the fact that it was not translated into Polish. This same text criticized the Talmudic morality of the Jews, as well as the Jewish converts to Christianity who marry each other, which should “make us think.” “The Public” should be made aware of “this subject, which a Pole can never speak or write enough on, while the Jewish Nation will stand in the way for a growth of education and the wealth of the nation, and we will be in danger of the transformation of our Motherland to Judea.”³⁶ In April 1815 an anonymous voice in the *Pamiętnik Warszawski* appeared, proclaiming even the concept of finding a territory for a Jewish state.

Similar statements reveal—apart from a bias and hostility—an uncertainty regarding the direction and methods of solving the Jewish question. “All Jews [...] form a state within a state here. They have their own separate and antisocial laws and customs, their own courts, language, dress code, religion. [...] Jewish politics [...], let us say, sneers at governments, which aim in vain to their civilization for a long time.” In spite of everything, writes Stanisław Kostka Potocki, they must be tolerated “everywhere, where the civilization of people has not reached a level where it can do without these cursed but necessary guests, because they have in their hands the whole trade and industry of the country, which is impossible to do without. Until I am convinced that our people are capable of replacing the Jews in industry and trade I will uphold that Jews are an evil necessity, and I shall pray to Heaven that with the help of the Government they will stop being so.”³⁷

It was of course realized that not granting civil rights to the Jews is contrary to one of the basic principles of liberal ideas, that of equality before the law. “I respect all the liberal proposals which result from sound knowledge,” the former prefect of the Warsaw department, Franciszek Nakwaski explained in the columns of the *Pamiętnik Warszawski* in September 1815, but “as someone who knows about administration,” he expressed the view that before it will be possible to introduce full equality before the law, “it is necessary to make some preparations”—this especially relates to “people of the Old Law [...]. Tolerance [...] became general, but it would not be blameworthy to get rid of the prejudiced stubbornness that differentiates the Jews from other inhabitants of our country. The Government, spreading its protective authority over all religions or beliefs of the inhabitants, has the right to impose its will on them for their own good.” Jewish relig-

ious assemblies must be abolished, and the permission to purchase landed property should be dependent on the compliance to wear a European mode of dress. The conviction that the theory cannot be put into practice “here” was throughout the whole of the nineteenth century the frequent slogan of the conservatives who fought against liberalism, but the liberals themselves also took it up when they were opposed to even more radical theories. A German journalist (in an article published in translation in *Dekada Polska*) proposed: “Would it not be possible to have the Jews in Poland earning income which is beneficial to the country, cannot they be trained as factory workers?” The translator answered in the notes: “but how to remove the century-old obstacles which resisted against the Imperial French Government and against many? I speak of the prejudices and superstitions of the Jews, their mystical existence, their theocracy, their religious intolerance. *Hic Rhodus, hic salta!*”³⁸ Polish liberals felt completely helpless: unable to find a solution, they preferred to blame the Jews themselves.

Wawrzyniec Surowiecki belonged to the rare thinkers who did not succumb to pressure in the Jewish question. “It is only to the Jews that Poland owes the survival of its trade and crafts!”³⁹—he wrote with an openness that was rare amongst the Poles in the nineteenth century. He regarded specific features of the Jews as a result of their social situation. In this rational approach, free from anti-Jewish prejudices as also from the *naǰve* zeal of the enlightened reformers, Surowiecki was an exception amongst his contemporaries.

In 1830 in the Diet of the Kingdom there appeared a relatively strong opposition, amongst whom, however, the Kalisz Group, devoid of leaders, played an inferior role. That is why it is interesting to look at the comments made by both Chambers of the Diet on the Reports of the Council of State about the situation of the country in the years 1824–1830.⁴⁰ They show how much the delegates and senators, who did not belong to the small circle of confirmed liberals, assimilated the elements of liberal thought.

The delegates once more demand the annulment of censorship, bemoaning the sad state of the educational system after the dismissal of Potocki, calling for the increase in effort of the integration of Jews with the Polish society. They criticize the dependency of the courts on the government (“the transferal of the judge from one place to another undermines the independence of the judge’s sentence and leaves him dependent on the ministerial will”⁴¹), deal in great detail with the breaking of law and with the disturbance of the freedom of individuals by police authorities—with

illegal arrests, holding in prison without a trial, the mistreatment of prisoners and with violation of the procedure of interrogation. They criticize the existence of the secret police and demand the removal of the influence of the authorities in the local elections.

The basis of the socio-economic ideology was determined by the axiom that “our poor country can subsist only by thrift.”⁴² “All public expenses being by definition evil, [...] they should be administered with the greatest prudence possible.”⁴³ The Diet “calls for [...] a moderation in the spending of public money”⁴⁴—the delegates clearly would be happy if as much of the expenses as possible were covered from state demesnes. They complain about the fiscal stringency of the treasury, directed by Franciszek Ksawery Drucki-Lubecki, associated with the breaking of the law during the collection of taxes, sometimes not even passed by the Diet. A special concern is the limiting of the production of vodka by the introduction of a “monopoly”; meanwhile “the production of vodka [...] is in our country a necessity for the easier sale of grain which remains without demand after potatoes have been popularized, ‘as well as’ for giving the owners the possibility of paying taxes.”⁴⁵

The Lower Chamber criticizes the excessive expenses on the fashionable buildings in larger towns, above all in Warsaw, and also on the police; the Senate emphasized the fact that “one of the main reasons of the exorbitant expense of national administration was its needless centralization. Everything without exception resorts to the central authority of the country, even that which could be settled more quickly and better by local offices.” A reform of offices is therefore needed—“in the form of depopulating them.”⁴⁶

The endeavor to save has two fundamental limitations. Firstly “the expenses in enlightening the public can never be too great.” “The principle” must be opposed “that is ruinous to all countries that simple people would overexert their brains if they were more enlightened”—it will be enough to compare the “happiness, wealth, customs, morality and all the benefits of Germany, France or England to the poverty, debasement, crimes” in Portugal, Spain or Italy to understand that “the more people are enlightened, the more they are able to appreciate the benefits of a government and the gains resulting from peace and a respect for the law.”⁴⁷

The delegates agree also on certain expenses for the support of economic development, strictly linked with the development of education. “The success of today’s nations is seated firmly in industry; how is an industrial nation to be formed if the people cannot read?”⁴⁸ The Diet acknowledges the necessity of supporting industry “up to the time, in which

the factories and handcrafts of Poland in all the voivodships reach the level where they can survive without the use of the prohibitive system, which is so harmful to the rest of the consumers in the country.”⁴⁹ The delegates do not fail to boast of their knowledge of the international exchange theory worked out by English classical economists: “If all governments, enlivened by the spirit of brotherhood, freed trade from hindering ties, mankind would return to its natural balance and would not need any other indicators of production and exchange than the feeling of their need; the well-being of the nation would soon blossom.”⁵⁰ In the meantime, however, taxes are necessary, although they could be a little lower, and should—as in England and the United States—be fixed by Parliament. Internal taxes should be abolished unconditionally.

Industry, surely, should be supported—but agriculture is the most important, and so the government should aim at making the grain trade easier, at raising the prices of farm products and—obviously—at lowering the export taxes on these products. When it comes to education, declarations about the necessity of expenses are linked with bemoaning the fact that the Ministry of Education employs too many officials. The money spent on the salaries of the Society of Elementary Books officials should be spent on the elementary schools themselves, and, instead of maintaining a permanent and costly office, the Government could announce competitions for school books from time to time.

The delegates clearly yearned “for the time of our ancestors,” who “held [...] usually unpaid official positions; their self-sacrifices in peace and war [...] were rewarded by the kings by granting them land tenures.”⁵¹ It was understood, however, that the resurrection of this ideal was impossible. The *Uwagi* of the parliamentary chambers on the report of the Council of State form a splendid example of the gentry variant of liberal thought. The idea of a cheap state, weak bureaucracy, decentralization of the political system, the dominance of the countryside over the town and the independence of the citizen–landowner from any state authority form the leading thoughts of this text and are more clearly visible than in the more refined and erudite statements of Wincenty Niemojowski or other members of the Kalisz group.

The ideology of the *Uwagi* cannot, however, be reduced to a simple reception of ideas that just happened to be perfectly suited for the protection of the social position of the nobility. The delegates and senators operate within the circle of enlightened liberal images that perfectly fit the point of view of the gentry. They never refer directly to the privileges or tradition of

the nobility, but justify their views in the categories of enlightened humanitarianism. They believe in reason, progress and statistics: when they want to prove that the lottery is harmful and immoral, they do this by publishing a table in *Uwagi* representing the level of delinquency in the various departments of France as compared with the number of those playing on the lottery. Gentry liberalism is a separate and perfectly valid branch of liberal thought which too often is univocally connected with the townspeople and with the intelligentsia. The liberal nobility emphasize the elements of the doctrines that are profitable to them, but all advocates of any ideology have done this throughout history.

No wonder, then, that the leaders of the Kalisz Group blended liberal thought with care for the interests of the gentry. Bonawentura Niemojowski, not less than the others, objected against the economic ideas of Lubecki. When Wincenty Niemojowski supported the moratorium project for gentry who were in debt, he argued that there are more debtors than creditors, so there could be more winners than losers. Such an application of the Benthamite principle of the greatest happiness for the greatest number testifies to his deftness in using modern liberal ideas for the defense of the interests of the gentry.⁵² Niemojowski was known as an extreme legalist—during the November uprising he was against the confiscation of beds and bedding for the army hospitals because this would infringe private property. In the matter of the moratorium he was, however, able to demand the legal suspension of the sanctity of contracts which, after all, for a nineteenth-century liberal should have belonged to things of the highest value.

The Kalisz Group was often called doctrinarian, transplanting the French liberal ideas of Benjamin Constant⁵³ who to a great degree continued the thought of Montesquieu—who was, in turn, an ideologue of nobility liberalism *avant la lettre*. Adapting the thought of Constant to the requirements of the politics of the gentry, the Niemojowskis carried out a certain return to the source. In Constant we shall find many views close to that of the gentry liberals, and clearly contradictory with what the enlightened centralists understood as “liberality.” In this way Constant was against Rousseau’s concept of a united and undivided sovereignty and general will, proclaiming the slogan “there is no sovereignty.” He demanded the decentralization of the political power and a strong self-government that was clearly contrary to the Jacobin radical tradition. Another of the main French liberal politicians of this era, François Guizot held the ownership of land higher than the ownership of capital—which shows that a simi-

lar attitude of many liberals from the Kingdom did not have to be the effect of economic backwardness of Polish lands.⁵⁴

Liberalism in the first half of the nineteenth century could be based equally well on the gentry as on the third estate, and the interpretation of French liberalism as unsuited for Polish conditions must be seen as very doubtful.

The growing antiliberalism of the authorities of the Kingdom does not seem to have stopped the slow but constant rise in the popularity of liberal ideas amongst the educated part of the society. In retrospect it is obvious that in the 1820s liberalism—in Poland and Europe—was still in a stage of development and of strengthening its position. The liberalism of the nobles presented in the *Uwagi* of the Diet is extremely different from that of, let us say, Węgrzecki or Rembieliński about 1815–1820; however, this difference was not probably fully clear for contemporaries, since some former Jacobins appear amongst the sympathizers of the opposition. At the same time the attitude of a part of the Polish elite towards parliamentary opposition testifies to the fact that the fundamental tenets of liberal political thought were often misunderstood. The best example here can be Stanisław Staszic, whose fear of “exclusion” and “feudalism” influenced the centralizing inclinations of some liberals, and who saw in the liberal opposition only the destructive anarchic spirit of the nobility.⁵⁵

From the early 1820s cracks appear in the already not very cohesive building of the “enlightened liberality.” The battle of the romantics with the classicists discussed in every Polish textbook on literature has equally fundamental importance for the history of social thought; the controversy concerned wider matters than just aesthetics. The liberal position was most distinctly presented already in 1819 by a Professor of the Wilno University, Jan Śniadecki. The main slogan of romanticism, he wrote, is “not to limit the imagination.” Meanwhile, however, “of all the powers of the human soul imagination is the bravest, but without a curb it is the most dangerous and most harmful. All the inventions of atheism, all the emptiness of superstition in false religions [...] are the works of unbridled imagination. [...] Imagination is to intellectual life what passions are to the animal life of a person, it is the source of both virtues and perversions [...]. Imagination and passion without the supremacy of reason are always criminal and harmful, just as under its rule they are beneficial and charitable.”

When Śniadecki wrote, “Reason is the relentless judge of human rights,”⁵⁶ Maurycy Mochnacki answered, “If ordinary means [...] based on experience and observation are not sufficient in this case, then let us aban-

don the facts, [...] and fathom the secrets and wonders of the intellectual world let us use inspiration and imagination.”⁵⁷ The conflict referred therefore to the actual philosophical foundations of the vision of man. Man for liberals was always (in the nineteenth century in any case) a rational being who keeps passions under the control of reason and higher feelings. The liberals were convinced that the reversal of this order, the acknowledgement of the authority of emotions over reason would mean a breakdown of civilization and a return of barbarity: the negation of progress, a return to ignorance, irrationality and backwardness, with which for the past two generations the Enlightenment had fought a deadly fight.

“Let us, Poles, listen to the teachings of Locke in philosophy, Aristotle and Horace in literature, and Bacon in the rules of the science of observation and experience,”⁵⁸ advised Śniadecki, while for Stanisław Kostka Potocki “a bad taste” is an inseparable companion and logical effect of a “bad government.” “The crazy notion that Poland exists through anarchy” was “suitable in a time when *liberum veto* was the principle of our government and Macaronicism was the principle of style.” So “the united “mystic-romantic estates” aiming at “destroying the clarity of the Polish language, as also the logical way of thinking” are dangerous to liberal politics to the same degree as for classical aesthetics.⁵⁹

The leader of the Kalisz Group, Wincenty Niemojowski expressed himself in 1830 in an equally decisive way. “The Romantics, having disdained all rules, want to bring arbitrariness and anarchy into the Commonwealth of Learning; we want respect for the law everywhere and always.” Niemojowski differentiates “fantasy” from “imagination”: the first, which characterizes the romantics, is ruled by “passion or addiction,” the second, characterizing the classicists, is directed by “reason and taste.” The victory of the former marked the capitulation of the human mind under the pressure of barbarism, personified today by German philosophy. “No other metaphysical sect caused so much unhappiness [...] and insulted human reason so much as Kant’s sect,” thus Niemojowski, with approval, quotes the sentence of Śniadecki whose knowledge of Kantianism was very foggy.⁶⁰

It could seem that enlightened liberals worried unnecessarily: Polish romantics did not reject the idea of reason, and although they valued feelings and imagination, after all they never called for the complete liberation of passion. The great patriotic idea in a certain sense disciplined Polish romantic thought, giving it an aim to which spontaneous self-expression should be subordinated; while freedom-oriented romantic internationalism constituted, in a sense, to a continuation of enlightened universalism. The

romantics themselves after 1830 often spoke with contempt about their dispute with the classicists, claiming that the literary matters served only as a screen for patriotic ideas.⁶¹ And yet Śniadecki, and then Niemojowski and other liberals accurately noticed certain consequences of romanticism. The tendency to emancipate from passions really carried a death threat for the enlightened and liberal way of thinking. In the romantic era it had not yet materialized but was to return in the last years of the nineteenth century: then the liberals would repeat Śniadecki's reasoning, but this time the fight with programmatic irrationalism would be far more difficult.

The basic hostility was accompanied, as usually happens, by the reception of certain elements of the rejected philosophy. The changes are slow: the weakness of Romantic influences on the liberal views are perfectly demonstrated by the relatively disinterested attitude of the enlightened liberals to the national idea. This is not a result of the limitations imposed by censorship, but that of ideology. Enlightened modernizers—centralists, admirers of Frederick the Great, Joseph II, later Napoleon and Alexander I, saw the problem in the formation of a modern state and the modern nation, which will come into being *per se*, when “feudalism” and privileges have been abolished and equality before the law has been introduced.

The “Nation” for liberal journalism of the Duchy of Warsaw and the Polish Kingdom usually means all the inhabitants of the state—sometimes in the historical meaning, as all the inhabitants of the former Commonwealth. It is, therefore, the western concept of the political nation. It contradicts both the earlier idea of the noble estate-nation and the emerging romantic idea of the ethnic nation. This concept sometimes adopts a selective undertone: in the narrower sense the “nation” is only the holders of political rights. The Diet always speaks of itself as the “nation” which can be both a reflection of Sieyćs's formula about an “assembled nation” from the times of the French Revolution, and the concept of the “noble nation” as represented at the Diet. “The poor are outside the estates of society; a poor person should be taken care of just like a madman, should be guarded just like a drunkard, should be protected just like an innocent; although the poor is not flawed by any of these faults, still he cannot use his own voice, he cannot have his proxy in Parliament,” the *Pamiętnik Warszawski* wrote in May 1815. Generally the affiliation to a nation in the above sense was linked with the ownership of land, sometimes, however, it was claimed that (as we read in the *Pamiętnik Warszawski* of July 1815) “mobile ownership is the ownership of qualities and talents” and it should, therefore, give the same privileges.

On the other hand, the concept of ethnic nation is almost unknown to Polish liberal thought before 1830.⁶² A few concentrations of foreign speaking populations in the Duchy and Kingdom did not form a problem, and the Jewish question—as we mentioned earlier—was considered social, not national. Immigration of foreigners to the country was as a rule seen favorably. “Looking at the growing population of Protestants here and at the more advanced civilizations of the countries from whence they came, we hope for large benefits for the manners of our country and the general progress in the love of order through the examples that these inhabitants can supply us with,” claimed a representative of the senate in 1830. Five years earlier, the delegates, in order to encourage “useful foreigners to settle in our country,” demanded a special government protection over the Protestant clergy and church.⁶³ “Let the [...] prejudice that the influx of foreigners is harmful to our nationality fall under the voice of reality and reason,”⁶⁴ Mikołaj Bronikowski appealed in 1816.

The concept of a nation is accompanied by a similar but not identical concept of nationality. “Theater dramatists [...] should enrich the Polish stage with plays, drawing on material from national history. [...] Many foreign plays can easily be given national meaning, so that not only will they amuse and spread morality, but raise the public spirit.” This fragment of the work of Harl, evidently altered by Gliszczyński, belongs to the earlier texts demanding a “national” culture.⁶⁵ The national specification still has a conventional character as it can be seen from the fact of giving a “national” shine to foreign texts.

The emphasis on “nationality” is not a creation of romanticism: the care of the classicists for the “good taste” and the correctness of Polish was, after all, also a form of care for the national culture. Even though the importance of the discussed problem naturally increases together with the increase in the pressure of the romantic idea, still the national slogans could easily co-exist with the norms of classical aesthetics. This co-existence is clearly seen in the oppositionist magazines of the young liberals, published in the Kingdom at the end of the second decade of the nineteenth century.⁶⁶ No one could predict a discrepancy between the national idea and the ideas of liberty, between the nursing of separate identity and enlightened cosmopolitanism.

Did “enlightened liberality” perceive at all the problem of an independent Poland? Already during the November uprising, Bonawentura Niemojowski claimed that the oppositionist Kalisz Group had always fought against the government and stirred a revolutionary atmosphere.⁶⁷ The ac-

tivity of the Kalisz Group may have had such an effect in practice, but it does not seem—in spite of Niemojowski's claim—that this was the secret intention of the liberals.

After all, in the first half of the nineteenth century it was generally accepted that the state could be sovereign even under the scepter of a foreign dynasty, if only the ruler complies with the laws of the country and does not diminish the territory. So, in Hungary, where the liberal opposition grew from the beginning of the 1820s, Habsburg dynasty was regarded as the legal authority, which only has to be induced to comply with the laws. One could imagine the development of the situation in the Kingdom of Poland along the same lines: if the emperor-king abides by the constitution, if he unites the eastern territories of the former Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth with the Kingdom, if—who knows—the lands of Prussian and Austrian Poland can somehow be reclaimed from the remaining two partitioning powers, then independence will become a fact without breaking Poland's dynastic union with Russia. It would seem—again in analogy with Hungary—that the political imagination of Polish liberals in the years between 1815 and 1830 evolved around concepts similar to those of Ferenc Deák and other liberal Hungarian advocates of the agreement with Austria, for whom the Compromise of 1867 and the resulting Austro-Hungarian dualism was tantamount to the regaining of independence.

Elements of similar thinking can be found in Adam Jerzy Czartoryski, the only Polish thinker of those times who paid attention to the problem of international relations. Czartoryski from his youth believed that the Russian solution of the Polish question did not necessarily need to be amicable to the Polish aspirations of independence. In his *Essai sur la diplomatie* (Essay on diplomacy) anonymously published in French,⁶⁸ he presented a federation as the best solution for disagreements between nations. Its best version had to be modeled after the relationship between England and Hanover where the only link was the monarch, while full separateness of both states was maintained. An analogy to the relationship of Poland with Russia is obvious. Such a presentation was in agreement with the liberal conviction that the interests of individual nations are complementary; that there exists “unity and harmony between natural laws and revelation, between philosophy and religion, between politics and the law, between the aim of the government as a whole and the aim of the existence of man,”⁶⁹ whereas the requirements of individual interest are identical with the demands of justice. This attitude allowed optimistic hopes that the desired changes can be carried out peacefully.

The logical course of reasoning, the elegant style, as well as the persuasive and unemotional manner of argumentation do not leave any doubts that the *Essay* is written in a pure Enlightenment spirit. At the same time, however, there appear some preromantic traits that is lacking in other liberal authors in the Kingdom. "The main feature of nationality," writes Czartoryski, "is the common and more or less ordered language."⁷⁰ Nationality is always the basis of a state and if one state attempts to conquer another inhabited by the population of the same nationality, it is a lesser crime than if the victim is a state populated by a different nation.

These ideas sound quite radical: it is possible to discern in them the embryo of the concept of monoethnic state that would not become widespread until the beginning of the twentieth century. This radicalism is, however, a little misleading. When Czartoryski writes about nationality as the basis of a state, he forgets—it would seem—the linguistic definition of nationality, presented ten or so pages earlier. Not only in his political practice but also in his other works "the nation" is neither a linguistic nor an ethnic unit claiming independence based on natural law, but—traditionally—an entity based on historical state traditions. The ideological atmosphere of the era reduced the potential radicalism of the *Essay*; and anyway, written anonymously in a foreign language, it did not exert any influence on Polish thought.

The influence of romantic ideas is displayed in the historic consciousness of the liberals, too. For enlightened people the political system of the former Commonwealth was a pitiable anarchy, however, in the 1820s there appeared a different picture: the former Commonwealth was almost an ideal liberal state, with the small difference that only the nobility was regarded as the nation. This, however, was possible to reform by widening that concept of the nation to include all the inhabitants. Such views could be deeply embedded in the spirit of "enlightened liberality": Mikołaj Bronikowski ends his praise of the "Republican Government" of the former Poland with an enthusiastic eulogy to Alexander I and the "liberal constitution" bestowed by him, which restored the former Polish freedom without its abuses.⁷¹ There is no doubt, however, that the reference to the traditional noble democracy was a path along which romantic historicism crept into the kingdom of the ahistoric universalism of the Enlightenment and disturbed its internal logic.

The mixture of new aesthetic and political romantic ideas with certain elements of liberal thought can be found in numerous secret conspiracies throughout Russian Poland. As a young man, Adam Mickiewicz (soon to

become the greatest Polish poet) and his fellow-students from Wilno University, who formed clandestine youth organizations, still functioned in the midst of the enlightened ideas of “the Motherland, science and virtue.” At the same time, however, Walerian Łukasiński and the activists of the National Freemasonry established by him (1819) already placed an emphasis on the idea of “nationality,” whereas in the Patriotic Society, founded by Łukasiński in 1820, the political elements stepped out even more strongly. All the same, even this organization was not aiming at full independence but rather at the reunification of the Polish Kingdom with the eastern territories of the former Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, whilst retaining the Polish–Russian personal union.

The world of conspiracies was linked with the world of legal politics. Stanisław Węgrzecki took part in National Freemasonry, and for a time he was considered its possible honorary president. Bruno Kiciński, who was in contact with the organizations of Łukasiński, and Andrzej Plichta, one of Kiciński’s co-workers, was an activist in the Patriotic Society. Wiktor Heltman, one of the editors of the *Dekada Polska* was active in the youth societies. Even Wincenty Niemojowski translated the widespread manuscript *The Catechism of Carbonari* from French; he was accused of encouraging the youth to plot, without endangering himself.⁷² The conspirators, although far removed from liberal moderation and legalism, usually draw their vision of the social and political system of Poland from liberal thought. There is nothing strange in this, since the market of ideas offers various types of liberalism and conservatism, and the latter did not come into consideration.

The November uprising brought a short-lived and belated triumph to enlightened liberality, at a time when romantic ideas already reigned in Europe. Wincenty Niemojowski took part in the coalition National Government headed by Adam Czartoryski (at the time universally seen as a conservative). Since December 11, 1830, the press organ of the Kalisz Group was the *Kurier Polski* (The Polish Courier). Earlier it proclaimed the ideas of the young romantics and the former editors of the “Courier” still had a certain influence on the magazine which may have radicalized the opinions of the Kalisz Group during the uprising.⁷³ Liberal ideas can also be found in the columns of the more conservative newspaper *Polak Sumienny* (The Conscientious Pole) published by Feliks Saniewski.

The liberals retained their pre-uprising direction of thinking which testifies that the censorship before November 29 did not warp their opinions in any major way. The manifesto of the Diet of December 20, 1830, coming

into being due to their major influence, presents the genesis of the uprising without paying almost any attention to the national question. The king of Poland breached the constitution: “after crushing all commitments which would have justified an uprising against the enforced authority which no government, even the most legitimate, would allow; who will not judge that all contracts between the authority and the nation have been broken [...]?” It is clear that the political order is the result of a contract between the political nation and the monarchy—two sides with equal rights. The breaking of this contract by the monarch frees also the nation from its obligations.

As late as December 1830, Wincenty Niemojowski considers the “spreading of liberal ideas and the instilling of civil virtues”—and so not “nationality,” and even less independence—as the main aim of *Kurier Polski* ⁷⁴. However, half a year later (18 VI) an anonymous author wrote in the *Kurier*: “The one and only catchword is Independence, [...] I should prefer a Polish tyrant in a whole and independent Poland than all the sweetness of a constitutional life and guarantees from Moscow. First it is necessary to be; then to be well.” This formula is the reminiscent of the well-known slogan of Prince Adam Czartoryski and his supporters from the times of the Great Emigration: first to exist and later how to exist. Here, however, it is probably not a sign of social conservatism but of the political radicalism of the liberals.

The Kalisz Group, after some hesitation, agreed to the dethronement of the Czar, it does not, however, mean their support for a change of the political system. “Our government, despite the dethronement of Nicholas, is a monarchic–constitutional one with the difference that we do not have a monarch.” True, the author of the discussed text is ready to acknowledge—“in the revolutionary state”—the principle of “the authority of the people (*la souveraineté du peuple*)” constituting a novelty in the liberal thought of the Kingdom; at the same time, however, he wants to strengthen the position of the senate as a house representing “aristocracy which can nowhere, and especially here, be terrible for the public cause because time and education has taken away its former attributes of feudalism and power.” ⁷⁵

The views in the peasant and Jewish questions remained unchanged. The *Kurier Polski* described the edifying examples of the gentry who promised to present the peasant-soldiers with land; it supported (in principle) the plan of granting the peasantry land from government property; but the best representative of the liberals’ opinion was probably the voice claiming that the peasants first of all need education, and it is that—rather than

social reforms—that the Diet and landowners should be caring about the most.⁷⁶

Similarly as in the pre-uprising period, the tendency to support the integration of Christians and Jews mingles with the fears and the stereotypical criticism of Jewish faults. The concern was mostly about whether to take Jews into the army, or whether to retain the system of buying out, as before the uprising. The *Polak Sumienny* displayed some sympathy towards the Jews by publishing “The ponderings of a Jew while on sentry duty”—a text written in the form of the contemplations of a Jew-patriot serving in the army.⁷⁷ The more liberal *Kurier*, however, often denounced the cunning of the Jews who evaded conscription and demanded the raising of the taxes paid by them rather than including them in the army. In May 1831 the liberal ministers Teodor Morawski and Alojzy Biernacki defended the government project of the complete liberation of Jews from military service in exchange for an increase in recruitment tax.⁷⁸ It has to be remembered that the radical Patriotic Society did not suggest a plan for the emancipation of Jews either.

The liberalism of the gentry presented itself best, as formerly, in the field of civil liberty. The liberals were opposed—even in the time of war—to a special law about censorship, considering that crimes committed by the press, as all others, should be judged according to the penal code of 1818.⁷⁹ Although they often had disputes with the Patriotic Society and with the radical daily newspaper *Nowa Polska* (New Poland), they acknowledged the Society’s right to legal existence and activity. The most interesting, however, is their relationship to the eternal problem of all revolutions: what to do with persons compromised during the former regime?

“What are we to do with spies?”—already on the January 8, 1831 asked an author who signed himself B.M. in the columns of the *Kurier*, wondering whether spying is specified as an offence in the penal code. If not, then “spying would not be an offence; because an act which is not prohibited is an act that one is allowed to carry out,” and “according to Article 23 of the constitution: ‘nobody can be punished, except by the existing law and by the sentence of a proper court’.” Luckily there was a clause on spies: articles 67–68 of the code say that a rebellion against the dynasty, government and constitution is a crime against the state and is punishable by death. The actions of spies evidently broke the constitution; their principle was not law, but a secret and lawless order. A spy cannot explain that, according to his belief, he acts legally because “in our constitutional country police authority and all operations in this matter are the exclusive attributes of

the Government Commission of Internal Affairs and the Police; the spies knew very well because no one could hide behind a lack of knowledge of the laws of the land, that all activities that do not come from this constitutional source are not police activities, but high treason.”

A polemicist soon gave voice: the existing law does not give a basis for punishing spies, and the legality of the courts is too precious to endanger it by a far-fetched interpretation of the code. We should act differently. There is a revolution; the dictator should therefore call special revolutionary tribunals that would judge spies irrespective of the existing legal system acting on the basis of the code of 1818. This undoubtedly radical plan retains, however, in the same way as the previous one, a care for legalism; the author believes that a single lawless act will be less harmful than the loose interpretation of the laws. The polemicists’ thoughts revolve within the political and legal framework of the constitution of the Kingdom; they both consider that—as wrote the above quoted B. M.—“after the liberation we cannot govern ourselves in the same way as we were governed before the liberation.”

In February 1831 the *Polak Sumienny* published a text of exceptional interest, entitled “Young and Old Liberalism.” It is a kind of summary of the previous development of liberal thought in Polish lands.

“The development of the principles of personal liberty [...] enabling the subjects to influence the ruling power in a legal way is the aim of old and young liberalism”; old liberalism, however, which came into being during the French revolution accepted certain features which were contrary with its original spirit. It introduced “under the guise of a beneficial system of unity, a centralization of authorities, and later an administrative bureaucracy after a unitary scheme based on the supposed eternal laws of reason.” Cosmopolitanism and excessive anticlericalism—passing sometimes into intolerance and antimonarchism—belong to the defects of old liberalism. All these features are easily explained by the situation of France on the eve of the revolution, presently, however, they are harmful. They do not reflect the essence of liberalism which consists in “making nations happy.” “Young liberalism, which should be the *credo* for Poles, [...] is marked by a deep respect for nationality, this dearest jewel of the people and the source of the greatest virtues [...]. Liberalism of our age [...] teaches that the happiness of the homeland is the sum of the happiness of its citizens,” and the “complete freedom of belief, freedom of teaching, freedom of forming societies, freedom of industry and trade, freedom of press are the essence of public life.” The conclusion is that federalism and the de-

centralization of authority are the most sensible principles of the political system.

Young liberalism developed in France under the influence of German philosophy. Its best indications are the 1830 revolutions in France and Belgium, in which “legality and the love of nationality reigned over all feelings. We saw no bloodshed there, [...] not only personal freedom but, what seemed improbable in revolutions, even everybody’s convictions were respected.” It was the same during our uprising. “Poland, through emotions and inspiration was acting in the spirit of the pure and magnanimous liberalism at which France arrived only after long experience.” This happened because in Poland “liberalism came upon fertile soil”: the freedom of the nation of the nobles, which had already existed for a long time, was expanded to all the inhabitants through the Constitution of the 3rd of May and so “a more enlightened liberalism prevailed over a one-sided republicanism. [...] We were first in Europe in this and in everything that is related to reasoned liberty.” The author summarizes his reasoning with the optimistic conclusion “that the most correct political theory for us” is in agreement both with the Polish national character and with the spirit of the times.

In the history of thought the way in which views are justified is often more interesting than the views themselves. The political program introduced in the text is very close to gentry liberalism, as we saw in the remarks of the commission of the Diet of July 1830 (and so only a few months earlier than the discussed article); the enemy is the centralist liberalism of the ex-Jacobins. Greater emphasis on “nationality” is the only novelty, but, after all, the actual concept of nationality was not alien to enlightened liberals. However, in order to justify the old politics, a new philosophy was used:

“Anyone who has reflected on the history of the world (...), must have noticed that it is nothing else but the external revelation of the spirit that brings life to a community. The Neapolitan Vico, over a hundred years ago, first exposed this great thought, which, passing into the works of Herder and Johann Müller only in our days, under the influence of the new German school, and especially that of Schelling, has gained victory as the Historic System. In this theory every event is judged not only in relation to the age old orders of Justice, but more specially in regard to the influence that it exerted on the education of the human tribe. Mankind is a collection of the most contradictory properties and envious feelings” which are “at loggerheads with each other. [...] The victorious thought becomes the ruling

one and forms the spirit of the times that means the intellectual atmosphere which influences people often in spite of themselves [...]. But the reign of any idea has a time limit. Action provokes reaction. While one set of images rules, the others, in opposition, spread wider, at first invisibly, later they begin to reshape the former, and finally take precedence. In this way a revolution forms first in the minds before it is put into action. The spirit of every age is different. [...] The social state of any country is the effect of the Antagonism (battle) of powers that are envious of each other. To understand our moral position with regard to this is the subject of the present remarks.”

The ideas are justified here by history (the agreement with the national character) and by agreement with the spirit of the times, and not—as previously—by their objective harmony with the nature of things: the importance of the idea can therefore be only local and historic, and not universal, whereas a new idea will at some time be replaced by the next. It can seem that this is a departure from the linear concept of development to the Baroque wheel of fortune; it was not by chance that the great Baroque thinker, the Italian Giambattista Vico is acknowledged as one of the authorities. Romantic historicism, however, did not exclude progress, and every next idea called up by the “spirit of the times” is—as can be presumed—more perfect than its predecessor. Progress has a dialectical character, not a cumulative one.⁸⁰

A change in justification does not mean a radicalization of views: “old” liberalism served the French revolutionists and the enlightened despots to awake fanaticism and hatred, “young” liberalism meanwhile conquers with moderation and gentleness. Could such a blend of moderation with romanticism be successful? Could—had the repressions after the uprising not brutally broken the evolution of ideas in Poland—a thought have been created close to the former “enlightened liberalism,” only justified in the romantic fashion? Events took a different course. In times of persecution, conspiracy and emigration not only the way in which political ideas were justified had to change in the spirit of the new doctrines. The ideas themselves had to change, too.

Notes

1 Alina Barszczewska-Krupa, ed., *Rajmund Rembéliński. Jego czasy i jego współczesni* [Rajmund Rembéliński. His epoch and his contemporaries] (Warsaw, 1989), 177.

2 Stanisław Węgrzecki, *Dzieje o znaczeniu władzy duchownej obok świeckiej w Polsce*

- [History related to the respective roles of ecclesiastical and secular power in Poland] (Warsaw, 1818), 174; Węgrzecki, "Uwagi nad i księgą Kodeksu Cywilnego francuskiego" [Remarks on the first book of the French Civil Code], *Dekada polska*, 1821, no. 7, 311.
- 3 Janina Leskiewiczowa, Franciszka Ramotowska eds., *Obraz Królestwa Polskiego w okresie konstytucyjnym* [View of the Polish Kingdom in the constitutional period], vol. I (Warsaw, 1984), 42–43, 33. (The quoted sentence deals with the Jewish people, but it is a good summary of the general attitude of the Report as a whole.)
- 4 Marian Kukiel, *Dzieje Polski porozbiorowe, 1795–1921* (Paris: Spotkania, 1983), 184.
- 5 Cf. Piotr Chmielowski, *Liberalizm i obskurantyzm na Litwie i Rusi, 1815–1823* (Warsaw, 1898), 23–27; Rett Ryszard Ludwikowski, *Główne nurty polskiej myśli politycznej, 1815–1890* (Warsaw, 1982), 202–208. Historiography has usually attributed the text to Stanisław Kostka-Potocki. Already after the publication of the Polish version of the present book there appeared a monograph on liberalism in East Prussia: Magdalena Niedzielska, *"Was heißt liberal?" Opozycja polityczna w Prusach Wschodnich w pierwszej połowie XIX wieku (do 1847 r.). Program i działalność.* (Toruń: UMK, 1998). The author quotes (p. 65) a German text bearing a clear resemblance to the analyzed article (and being, in turn, a translation of a French paper), thus giving a strong argument for searching for its foreign sources. This of course does not diminish the influence of this article on Polish intellectual history.
- 6 Cf. Kizwalter, *Kryzys Oświecenia*, 118, 121–123; Król, *Konserwatysty a niepodległość* (Warsaw, 1985), 31–32.
- 7 "Uwagi sejmiku Królestwa Polskiego o raporcie Rady Stanu z działalności rządu i stanu kraju w latach 1824–1830" [Remarks of the Diet of the Polish Kingdom on the Report of the State Council on the activities of government and state of the country 1824–1830], in *Sejm Królestwa Polskiego o działalności rządu i stanie kraju 1816–1830* [Diet of the Polish Kingdom on the activities of government and state of the country 1816–1830], ed. Janina Leskiewiczowa, Franciszka Ramotowska (Warsaw, 1995), 271.
- 8 "List z Kalisza, 18 X 1819" [Letter from Kalisz, October 18, 1819], *Orzeł Biały*, vol. III (November 1819) no. 2, 44–47.
- 9 Skowronek, "Skład społeczny," 481–487.
- 10 Benjamin Constant, *O monarchii konstytucyjnej i rękojmich publicznych* [On Constitutional Monarchy], transl. W. Niemojowski (Warsaw, 1831), vol. I, 17.
- 11 Constant, *O monarchii*, vol. II, 13 (Translator's note).
- 12 "Uwagi sejmiku Królestwa... [1820]," in *Sejm Królestwa Polskiego*, 71.
- 13 Constant, *O monarchii*, vol. II, 44 (Translator's note).
- 14 According to Peplowski, the word "progress" in the above meaning was first used only after 1831, see Peplowski, *Słownictwo*, 202.
- 15 "Historia tegoczesna" [Recent history], *Orzeł Biały*, 1819, vol. II, no. 13, 261–262.
- 16 Stanisław Kostka Potocki, *Podróż do Ciemnogradu i Świsstek Krytyczny (wybór)*, ed. E. Kipa (Wrocław: Biblioteka Narodowa, 1955), 81. Cf. Pierre Manent, *An Intellectual History of Liberalism* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1996). See also Władysław Zajewski, "Kaliszanie," in *Tradycje Liberalne w Polsce*, 84–85; Jerzy Szacki, *Ojczyzna, naród, rewolucja* (Warsaw, 1961), 60.
- 17 Constant, *O monarchii*, vol. I, 2–6 (Translator's introduction).
- 18 László Péter, "The Dualist Character of the 1867 Austro-Hungarian Compromise," in *Hungarian History–World History*, ed. G. Ránki (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1984), 85–164.
- 19 B. H. K. [Bruno hrabia Kiciński], "Historia tegoczesna," *Orzeł Biały* 1 (1819), no. 2, 45–46.
- 20 Quoted after Wiesław Pusz, *Nowy Parnas przedromantycznej Warszawy* (Wrocław, 1979), 95.

- 21 Stanisław Węgrzecki, "Uwagi nad I księgą Kodeksu" [Remarks on the First book of the Code.], *Dekada Polska*, 1821, no. 7, 300, 312–313, 306.
- 22 "Nowe dzieła. 'O władzy duchownej'" [New books. "On ecclesiastical power"], *Dekada polska*, 1821, no. 5, 233.
- 23 Potocki, "Świstek krytyczny" [Critical Scarps], in *Podróż do Ciemnogrodu*, 56.
- 24 X. S., "Wiadomość ogólnej moralności czy jest dostateczną do sądzenia w rzeczach prawa" [Does the knowledge of general morals suffice to judge in legal matters?], *Pamiętnik Warszawski*, August 1815, 381–395.
- 25 "O ciemnocie, despotyzmie i niewoli" [On Darkness, Despotism and Slavery], *Kronika drugiej połowy roku 1819*, vol. I, 14.
- 26 Potocki, *Podróż do Ciemnogrodu*, 45.
- 27 Górski, *Polska myśl ekonomiczna*, 148–149; cf. also Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, Book 3, Chapter 1.
- 28 Wincenty Niemojowski, *Głosy posła kaliskiego na sejmie Królestwa Polskiego 1818* [Speeches of delegate from Kalisz on the Diet of the Polish Kingdom 1818] (Poznań, 1818), 6.
- 29 Wawrzyniec Mirecki, "O prawodawstwie i administracji finansowej" [On legislature and financial administration], *Dekada Polska*, 1821, no. 6, 246–247; cf. no. 5, 199.
- 30 B. H. K. [Bruno Kiciński], "Warszawa", *Orzeł Biały*, 1819, vol. I, no. 13, 259–261.
- 31 W.N., *Do redaktora Dekady Polskiej* [Letter to the editor], *Dekada Polska*, 1821, no. 8, 346.
- 32 "Handel. List do wydawców Orla Białego" [Trade. Letter to the editor], *Orzeł Biały*, 1819, vol. II, no. 9, 163–164 (*Editorial footnote*).
- 33 Jedlicki, *Klejnot*, 258.
- 34 *Diariusz Sejmu Królestwa Polskiego* [Diary of the Diet of the Polish Kingdom] (Warszawa, 1818), vol. II, 14–15.
- 35 "Ekonomia polityczna. Żydzi uważani co do praw obywatelstwa" [Political Economy. The Jews regarded in respect of their rights to citizenship], *Pamiętnik Warszawski*, September 1815, 185.
- 36 "Nowe dzieło" [New books], *Orzeł Biały*, 1819, vol. III, 23–26.
- 37 Potocki, *Podróż do Ciemnogrodu*, 323–324, 152.
- 38 W. N., "Do redaktora Dekady Polskiej" [To the editor of *Dekada Polska*], *Dekada Polska*, 1821, no. 8, 343. (The text is a translation of an article by a certain F. A. Hahnrieder, with numerous comments by the translator.)
- 39 Surowiecki, *Wybór pism*, 208. Cf. Artur Eisenbach, *Emancypacja Żydów na ziemiach polskich 1785–1870 na tle europejskim* (Warsaw, 1988), 205.
- 40 *Sejm Królestwa Polskiego*, 261–369 (Remarks of the Lower Chamber) and 370–438 (Remarks of the Senate). On the *Remarks* see also Skowronek, *Skład społeczny*, 487, and Handelsman, *Adam Czartoryski*, vol. I (Warsaw, 1948), 140–143.
- 41 *Sejm Królestwa Polskiego*, 281.
- 42 *Sejm Królestwa Polskiego*, 378.
- 43 *Sejm Królestwa Polskiego*, 350.
- 44 *Sejm Królestwa Polskiego*, 350.
- 45 *Sejm Królestwa Polskiego*, 337.
- 46 *Sejm Królestwa Polskiego*, 437.
- 47 *Sejm Królestwa Polskiego*, 352.
- 48 *Sejm Królestwa Polskiego*, 352.
- 49 *Sejm Królestwa Polskiego*, 314.
- 50 *Sejm Królestwa Polskiego*, 333.
- 51 *Sejm Królestwa Polskiego*, 346.

- 52 [Bonawentura Niemojowski], "Sejm polski" [The Polish Diet], *Kurier Polski*, 1831, no. 513, 669; W. Niemojowski, *Głosy posła*, 7–8; Bortnowski, *Udział Kaliszan*, 252.
- 53 See e.g. Maurycy Mochnacki, "O stronnictwie tak zwanym kaliskim" [On the so-called Kalisz Group], *Dziennik Narodowy*, 1831, no. 243, reprinted in Mochnacki, *Dziela* [Works], vol. IV, Poznań 1863, 272–277. The incompatibility of the Western liberal patterns with the situation of the Polish Kingdom is stressed very strongly by Eisenbach, *Emancypacja Żydów*, 210–211.
- 54 Szyszkowski, *Benjamin Constant*, 72–75, 118, 128; Sobolewska, *Doktryna polityczna*, 179.
- 55 See Kizwalter, *Kryzys Oświecenia*, 56–62 on Staszic and his relation to liberalism.
- 56 Jan Śniadecki, "O pismach klasycznych i romantycznych [1819]" [On classical and romantic writings; 1819], in *Walka romantyków z klasykami*, ed. Stefan Kawyn (Wrocław, 1960), 56–62.
- 57 Maurycy Mochnacki, "Niektóre uwagi nad poezją romantyczną [1825]" [Some remarks on Romantic poetry; 1825], in *Walka romantyków*, 185.
- 58 Śniadecki, "O pismach," 58.
- 59 Stanisław Kostka Potocki, *Pochwały, mowy i rozprawy* [Laudations, Speeches, Essays], vol. II (Warsaw, 1816), 429, 437–438; Kostka Potocki, "Świstek Krytyczny" [1816], in his *Podróż do Ciemnogradu*, 23.
- 60 [W. Niemojowski], *Myśli dorywcze o romantyczności i romantykach* [Casual Thoughts on Romanticity and Romantics] (Kalisz, 1830), s. 10, 11, 42.
- 61 See the opinions of Mochnacki and J. B. Ostrowski from the period after 1830, in *Walka romantyków z klasykami*, 390, 392, 467.
- 62 Hugo Kollataj, *Uwagi*, 141, envisions a future Poland up to the Oder river, arguing on the basis of the alleged Slavic majority in Silesia and Western Pomerania. This fragment, however, is not typical of Kollataj, who always supported the idea of political nation, and can be interesting only as an antecedent of later development of the national idea. Cf. also Zieliński, *Naród i narodowość w polskiej literaturze i publicystyce lat 1815–1831* (Wrocław, 1969), 186ff.
- 63 *Sejm Królestwa*, op. cit., 375–376, 184.
- 64 Mikołaj Bronikowski, "O polepszeniu stanu włościan" [On improvement of situation of peasants], *Pamiętnik Warszawski*, April 1816, 446.
- 65 Harl, *Nauka Policji*, 319.
- 66 See "O narodowości" [On Nationality], *Dekada polska*, 1821, no. 3, 103ff.
- 67 [Bonawentura Niemojowski], "Sejm polski" [The Polish Diet], *Kurier Polski*, 1831, no. 513, 669.
- 68 [Adam Jerzy Czartoryski], *Essai sur la diplomatie* (Paris–Marseilles, 1830), 305–306. See also Marian Kamil Dziewanowski, "Czartoryski and his 'Essai sur la Diplomatie'," *Slavonic Review*, vol. 30, no. 3, September 1971, 589–605; Król, *Konserwatyści*, 64–70; Zieliński, *Naród i narodowość*, 149; and Jerzy Skowronek, *Adam Jerzy Czartoryski* (Warsaw: Wiedza Powszechna, 1995), 246–251.
- 69 *Essai*, 243.
- 70 *Essai*, 193.
- 71 Mikołaj Bronikowski, "Do redaktora Dekady Polskiej" [To the editor of *Dekada Polska*] *Dekada Polska*, 1821, no. 3, 139–142.
- 72 Hanna Dylagowa, *Towarzystwo Patriotyczne i sąd sejmowy* (Warsaw, 1970), 48–50, 60–61, 86; Szymon Askenazy, *Łukasiński* (Warsaw, 1929), vol. I, 283, 302; vol. II, 15; Pusz, *Nowy Parnas*, 107–109.
- 73 Władysław Bortnowski, *Walka o cele powstania listopadowego* (Łódź, 1960), 97.
- 74 Wincenty Niemojowski in the 11 December 1830 issue of *Kurier Polski*, quoted after:

Władysław Zajewski, *Walki wewnętrzne ugrupowań politycznych w powstaniu listopadowym 1830–1831* (Gdańsk, 1967), 60.

75 A. R., “O sposobie obradowania izb sejmujących” [On the mode of proceeding in the legislative Chambers], *Kurier Polski*, 1831, no. 505, 625–626.

76 W., “Uwagi o najpierwszej potrzebie naszych włościan” [On the foremost need of our peasants], *Kurier Polski*, no. 483.

77 *Polak Sumienny*, 1831, no. 5.

78 Eisenbach, *Emancypacja*, 272.

79 [W. Niemojowski] Dawny Posel [pseud.], “Wolność druku” [Freedom of the Press], *Kurier Polski*, 1831, no. 463, 393–395. This opinion was supported by Joachim Lelewel, “Czy kodeks nasz karny dostateczne zawiera przepisy na nadużycie wolności druku?” [Does our Penal Code have sufficient rules against the misuse of freedom of press?], *Kurier Polski*, no. 497, 1831, 580–581. An anonymous author was of a contrary opinion: A. B., *Wolność druku—dzienniki warszawskie* [Freedom of press—Warsaw dailies], *Kurier Polski*, no. 511, 659–662.

80 “Młody i stary liberalizm” [Young and old liberalism], *Polak Sumienny*, 1831, no. 43, 171–172; no. 44, 174–175 (I am grateful to Maciej Mycielski for giving me a hint at this very important text). For earlier interpretations cf. Zieliński, *Naród i narodowość*, 251–253, and Szacki, *Ojczyzna*, 242.

CHAPTER 3

Romantic Liberalism

Romantic rule in the Polish culture, culminating in the 1830s and 1840s, was a great trial for Polish liberal thought. Describing romanticism as liberalism in literature on the eve of the 1830s, Victor Hugo most probably had in mind that both these trends equally defy the literary and political establishment; this did not mean, however, that romanticists accepted liberal ideals. Romantic individualism differed greatly from liberal individualism: a principle, according to which an exceptionally talented or sensitive individual can disregard social norms and conventions, has a little, but not much in common with the principle giving every individual equal rights and checking everybody's right to freedom by the same right of his fellow-citizens. Anyway, already from the 1830s mutineers had at their disposal different forms of socialist thought, more radical than liberalism, and so more useful for contestation. Romantic thought was engaged in the spheres of historiosophic syntheses and existentialist problems. Liberalism, with its obvious sympathy for "piecemeal social engineering," could not therefore wake any enthusiasm in advocates of romantic ideas.

Of course liberal thought did not disappear. Some philosophical ideals are better suited to justify certain political programs, and some worse. Empiricism certainly fits liberalism better than German idealism, however, through a suitable interpretation every philosophy can legitimize every kind of politics. There existed, therefore, liberal thought rooted in romantic philosophy. Karol Libelt, August Cieszkowski or Henryk Kamieński spun complicated metaphysical deliberations in order to prove basic ideals of classical economy or liberal political theory which probably sounded banal already at that time. Clearly without this all concepts were exposed to rejection as obsolete and discordant with the spirit of the era.

Repression in Russian Poland, as well as the increasing persecution by the remaining partitioning powers caused the center of Polish intellectual life in

the 1830s to move into exile. The emigration, however, sought hope in radical ideals rather than in moderate liberal thought, although certain elements of the latter can be perceived in both great camps—amongst the followers of Prince Adam Czartoryski and in the much less compact democratic camp.

Czartoryski himself, starting with his activities in the Russian court, through his standing in the first years of the Kingdom up to his moderate oppositional position in the 1820s, appeared to be closer to “enlightened liberality” than to conservative ideals. However, his views evolved; in his émigré statements he more and more emphasized the necessity of moderation, more and more often he referred to religion and the necessity of maintaining social order. Nevertheless, Czartoryski contacted liberal politicians in England and in France since the Polish cause awoke the interests of liberals rather than conservatives in Europe. For the sake of liberals he emphasized (just as the Kalisz Group during the November uprising) that the monarch did not keep his contract with the nation that was concluded in the form of the constitution. This freed the subject from the duty of obedience and justified the armed resistance against tyranny. This argumentation had to find fertile soil in England: it is, after all, (I do not know whether fully consciously) modeled on the image and resemblance of the so called “Whig interpretation of history” which saw the “glorious revolution” of 1688 as the decisive moment in the history of England, when the nation forced James II Stuart to escape and appointed the governor of the Netherlands, William of Orange, in place of a law-breaching monarch. The second quarter of the nineteenth century was the era of the dominance of this interpretation which was to find its most perfect expression in the *History of England* of Lord Macaulay.

The followers of Czartoryski were unjustly accused of wanting to make Poland’s independence subservient to the Congress Kingdom. The fact is, however, that in their opinion it was the breaking of the constitution by the Czar that violated the Treaty of Vienna and justified the endeavor to regain full independence. Already as an exile, Czartoryski criticized the praise of the “coronation plot”—an assassination attempt on Nicholas I allegedly planned during his Warsaw coronation in 1828. For Czartoryski this would be a regicide alien to the Polish tradition. However, in the peasant question he came out as more radical than many liberals at home: on November 29, 1845 he called on the gentry to the voluntary and gradual enfranchisement of peasants—this appeal was only appreciated a few months later when the peasant anti-noble uprising (the so called Galician slaughter) showed the depth of the social conflict.¹

The pro-Polish propaganda in England in the first years of the emigration was orchestrated on behalf of Czartoryski by Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz, the epigone of the “liberality” of the late Enlightenment. Contacting the Whigs and even the radical democrats, he emphasized at the same time that the fight of the Poles for freedom did not have anything in common “with mad Jacobinism and with members of any radical organization.”

The diary of Niemcewicz is full of fascination with the political system and industrial development of Great Britain—a different attitude than that of the romanticists who mainly saw the poverty of the workers, destruction of nature through industry and the prevailing spirit of haggling. Niemcewicz describes with interest how in the factories of Manchester “children work for 12 hours a day, they worked up to 16, but a new law has prevented this. They earn 4–10 shillings a week, they have half an hour for breakfast, an hour for dinner.” During a journey from Bristol to Bath this curiosity is transformed into open admiration: “We drove not through a country but through the most beautiful garden, everywhere the most perfectly cultivated land, the most beautiful houses and country palaces, splendid roads, everywhere people employed and doing well. Whatever intellectual abilities and physical powers can accomplish all this the English did accomplish. These are the salutary results of constitutional monarchy, intellectual freedom and maritime position.”²

The well-known historian Karol Boromeusz Hoffman played a more important role amongst the supporters of Czartoryski. Hoffman edited between 1837–1839 the main press organ of the Hôtel Lambert, the *Kronika Emigracji Polskiej* (Chronicle of the Polish Emigration). Although as sympathizer of the constitutional monarchy, he did not exclude the restoration of Poland in form of a republic, if the recovery of independence were to coincide with the overthrow of monarchy in adjoining states. He was against linking the fight for independence with the fight for social change, he was not, however, the enemy of the latter if it were to be realized by peaceful reforms, “to which nations owe the rise of their well-being and power.”

As a declared Westernizer, he looked critically at the pre-partition Commonwealth. In its political system he did not perceive the forecast of the later liberal–democratic ideas, since the liberties were limited only to a single estate, therefore there was no equality before the law, while the modern “representative system [...] from the nature of things is based on the idea of general law and common interests and, therefore, on the repre-

sensation of everybody's rights and everybody's interest." Since the end of the 15th century Poland began to distance itself from the western road of development causing degeneration in its political system. One of the reasons was the weakness of the towns which could not oppose the nobility as an equal partner. For Hoffman, liberty was inseparable from an efficient government that would be able to execute the law and care for the citizens. These features of Hoffman's historical thinking come close to the later so-called Cracow Historical School, which, in the second half of the nineteenth century, started a new epoch in Polish historiography.³

All the same, in the *Kronika* published by Hoffman, it is not easy to find interesting deliberations on social themes. "Aristocracy and democracy are two indispensable elements of a good government," writes the author of an isolated article dealing with this matter. Discerning the aristocracy of birth, of "refinement," of talent and of wealth, he acknowledges the usefulness of each (which can be understood as the readiness to broaden the understanding of the elite beyond the traditional noble stratum), but he speaks most critically of the aristocracy of wealth, i.e. of the capitalists.⁴

Beginning from the 1840s, Hoffman withdrew from active politics, and conservative ideas, represented by Władysław Zamoyski, gained dominance in the circle of Czartoryski. Although the unofficial diplomacy of the Prince co-operated even with the very radical anti-Russian politicians of various countries (e.g. in the Balkans), in internal politics the conservative aspect took decided precedence over the liberal one.

The democratic camp of the Great Emigration was not uniform. Even if in some statements, especially from the circle of Joachim Lelewel, echoes of liberal thought could be heard, they were overshadowed by verbal radicalism—moderation and half-measures were for most emigrants a form of insult. The influence of Lelewel was most important not in political but in historiographic concepts: the interpretation of the democracy of the gentry as the first stage of the development of the modern idea of liberty in Poland became an important element of the historical self-consciousness of the Polish liberals and—spread by historians and innumerable journalists—gained popularity much greater than the opposing interpretation of K. B. Hoffman.⁵

The Founding Act of the Polish Democratic Society of 1832 (later referred to as the Little Manifesto) is maintained in a radical tone, and a mention of "the earth and its fruits common to all" gave the historians a reason for never-ending debates about the place of communist ideas in the thought of the leaders of the Society. More interestingly, however, whilst

calling for the radicalization of social and political ideas, the manifesto argues that it is necessary because analogous radicalization has already taken place in the West. As we can see, the old slogan of the necessity to “catch up with the West,” rooted in the enlightened-liberal tradition serves this time as an argument in favor of the democratic idea.

The Manifesto of the Polish Democratic Society of 1836 (The Great Manifesto) proclaims the equality of all people “as of beings having one and the same nature,” after which it states: “Every person has the right to seek their own happiness [...] Every person’s duty is to seek the happiness of others.” This thread was developed in later programmatic writings: one should take the middle road between “individualism” and “socialism.” The symmetry, however, is not perfect: the criticism of “individualism” is directed only against total egoism that makes social life impossible, while the criticism of “socialism” is much more significant. “Plato, fed with the principles of eastern absolutism, wanted to embrace society in one overwhelming unity [...] he could therefore dream of the communal ownership of property, even of the communal ownership of women and children.” However, cases of “complete renouncement of oneself in favor of an other person” occur very rarely, they are in conflict with human nature: society cannot be organized on their basis. “The destruction of individualism is as equally absurd a task as the destruction of social feelings by which nature has joined people together.”

“The ownership of property is the right of every person,” while the right to ownership, including the ownership of land, is given only by work. The later *Uwagi* (Remarks) of the Centralization (the main authority) of the Polish Democratic Society develop these thoughts in a manner close to the argumentation of John Locke in his *Two Treatises on Government* one and a half centuries earlier. The support of the right to ownership results naturally in the postulate of franchising the peasants, namely granting them ownership of the land that they cultivate. The effect of this would be a large number of smallholdings—the “middle estate” so long awaited by liberals.

Sometimes, however, the democrats were more radical, rejecting the notion of a third estate and dividing the Polish population into two groups: “the privileged estate, namely the nobility” and “the non-privileged estate, namely the people.” Such a dichotomous division is characteristic of the radicals aiming at a clear definition of their enemies, while the moderate trends see numerous classes in society that co-operate with each other. Obviously, the advocates of the dichotomous division failed to notice any

advantages in the monarchic–constitutional political system praised before 1830, but instead considered it a kind of despotism.⁶

It is worth, however, returning to those democrats who emphasized the importance of the third estate for the future of Poland. Jan Czyński, considered to be a radical, published an irregular periodical *Echo Miast Polskich* (Echo of the Polish Towns) between 1843–1844, whose main aim was to help in the political and economic emancipation of the towns. Remaining under the influence of the socialist concepts of Charles Fourier, Czyński with certainty was far from liberal ideas; nevertheless he gave an image of France (the real France of Louis Phillippe, not the revolutionary utopia) as the example for Poland, introducing it with the words that could be used by many liberal reformers.

“Here every inhabitant, noble or non-noble, Catholic or non-Catholic, carries the same burden, has the same duty. Almost the whole of the population is Catholic, but there is also the highest freedom for all the other faiths. In the Higher Chamber, in the Chamber of the Deputies, in the highest authorities you will find townspeople, craftsmen, dealers and factory owners. [...] Sacrifice, service, abilities, work, the feeling of their own dignity opened for the inhabitants of the towns the gate and the way to public services.” In opposition to the traditional hierarchy of values, Czyński glorifies the country, in which “the president of the parliamentary chamber is a candlemaker, the minister of the treasury a banker, the president of the Court of Justice a paper-manufacturer.”

The opposition against the dominance of the nobility in Poland made Czyński come close to the Czartoryski camp in the 1840s. He believed that in the future independent Poland the king’s powerful authority would be less dangerous than an aristocratic republic such as Poland before the partitions. A certain parallel is visible between the attitudes of Czyński and Karol Boromeusz Hoffman: two intellectuals of non-noble origin (the first Jewish, the second German) saw the protection against the over-strong position of Polish nobility in a strong monarchical government. Such an attitude was right in its own way: using the the problem of the Jewish emancipation as an example, Artur Eisenbach showed how inconsistently the émigré democrats accepted the idea of the equality of citizens before the law. He showed how strong, even in the most outstanding minds, were the elements of thinking in categories of the estate society.⁷

Henryk Kamiński also emphasized the importance of the middle estate. His *Stan średni i powstanie* (Middle Estate and the Uprising) written about 1845–1846, but published for the first time in 1982, is an agitation

pamphlet. It was written allegedly by a conspirator in the Polish Kingdom, a representative of the poorer stratum of city-dwellers in other words, “the middle estate, which stands a little higher in Enlightenment than peasantry which sometimes is poorer than the rich peasants, but does not feel the burden of dependency and does not have to be a slave to the feudal lord who rules over them.” The word “liberalism” never appears in the book, but the author is against extreme democracy, for whose followers “the hatred of those more powerful became more outstanding [...] than love for the people.”⁸ The middle estate is the stratum most qualified to spread democratic ideas: the author relies also on a “more powerful class,” but he threatens with death the nobility reluctant to join an uprising linked with a “social revolution,” that is, with the granting of the ownership of land to the peasant. While not believing in the efficiency of the mass insurrectionary propaganda amongst the peasants, he supposes that it should be spread first amongst the third estate in order to form a cadre for the fight for independence.

The thoughts of Kamiński and Czyński show how liberal elements influenced various threads of Polish intellectual life. An example of this is the reaction to the thoughts of Tocqueville: fragments of *Democracy in America* were printed in Polish translation in the *Demokrata Polski* (Polish Democrat), an organ of the Polish Democratic Society. The radicals from the Polish Democratic Society acknowledged Tocqueville as an ally, clearly ignoring the whole skepticism of this French liberal aristocrat towards the emerging mass democratic society.

The ideas of the émigrés seem fundamentally different from the legalist programs of organic work proclaimed inside the partitioned country. In essence, however, between the emigration and the country there existed a clear relationship; ideas circulated, the same people simultaneously published in officially allowed periodicals within the country and—under pseudonyms—in emigration (Kamiński is an excellent example). In principle, conspiracy was alien to the liberal disposition; sometimes, however, it could be justified. “Secret societies were hitherto a necessity in every state because the inequality prevalent everywhere forced equality, liberty and brotherhood to hide in secrecy [...] When Christian philosophy was banned in the Roman Empire, it had to hide in the catacombs.”⁹

Numerous Poznań followers of “organic work” engaged before 1846 in patriotic conspiracies. Among them was Karol Libelt, convicted in a trial in Berlin in 1847 to twenty years’ imprisonment. Others from Greater Poland, such as Karol Marcinkowski, were in contact with Czartoryski’s camp. They

should not be suspected of duplicity; the vision of the social and economic system presented in concessioned publications was undoubtedly sincere, while the conspiratorial activity had as its aim to regain the independence of Poland, and so belonged to a different sphere of life.

In the home country only the end of the 30s brought a certain animation of intellectual life. Capitalistic changes touched only a part of society as yet, however, they provoked questions about the further direction of development. The towns were still growing slowly (with the exception of Warsaw, whose population grew from 140 to 230 thousand inhabitants between 1830 and 1883). The Poles in emigration, however, could observe the life of highly developed societies. The visible symbol of change was the development of railways—the first section of the Warsaw–Vienna Railway was opened in 1845.

No wonder that between the early 1840s and the 1848 Revolution Polish liberal thought was concerned mainly with the development of material civilization. This trend was strengthened by the censorship of the partitioning powers that made discussions on openly political themes impossible.

The movement began in Greater Poland. In December 1835 a group of gentry under the direction of Gustaw Potworowski founded the Gostyń Casino—an organization that was to spread new methods of farming amongst the nobility. Greater Poland, where the gradual franchisement of peasants started as early as 1811, was the first of all the Polish lands to feel the necessity of modernizing the farming economy, whilst the nobility of Galicia and the Kingdom looked with curiosity at the Poznań experience. The activists of the Gostyń Casino undertook the publication of a professional magazine (in Leszno), entitled the *Przewodnik Rolniczo-Przemysłowy* (Agricultural-Industrial Guide). Apart from the economic aims they also set themselves the task of enlivening the intellectual life of the gentry, so the *Przewodnik*, at first timidly, then increasingly boldly, began to entertain the social problems.

In 1838 a magazine, *Tygodnik Literacki* (Literary Weekly), was published in Poznań with a wider sphere of interests. At first it limited itself to literature and the arts, with a clear emphasis on the culture of Slav nations, but by 1840 it was already bolder; this shift coincides with the change in editorialship, as well as with changes in the political atmosphere. “A rejuvenated country under a new government”¹⁰ linked a hope for political liberalization with the reign of Frederick William IV. From this time up to the end of the existence of the periodical, the socio-political problems (although without commenting on the current problems of internal politics) occupy a

fundamental place. In 1842 the more moderate Karol Libelt and the historian Jędrzej Moraczewski broke away from the *Tygodnik*; from these times the magazine acquired an increasingly more radically democratic direction with a shade of religious mysticism. Moraczewski and Libelt founded their own periodical entitled *Rok pod względem nauki, oświaty i wypadków czasowych* (A year with respect to learning, education and temporary events) which came out in 1843–1846.

In the beginnings of the 1840s two new concepts emerged in the Poznań region: “intelligentsia” and “organic work.” An educated urban stratum, engaged in the reforms of the country, began to develop already in the epoch of Stanislas Augustus. In the same period there appeared also the idea that in an unfavorable political situation it is better to put politics aside for a time and engage in internal activities aiming at the change of social consciousness, development of culture and economy. This concept, soon to play an immense role in social and intellectual Polish life, was labelled “organic work.” This was a reference to the organic vision of society in which every member of social organism has a special role to fulfill. “Organic work,” according to its ideologues, had to cure the weakness of the poorest members of society and thus transform the ailing social organism into an “organic” whole.

The notion of *Intelligentz* appeared in 1830s Prussia among the advocates of German idealistic philosophy, whose influence encouraged the use of abstract concepts in relation to social groups (“intelligentsia” as a feature of the mind, similarly to the Hegelian “spirit,” could be instilled into certain classes or institutions). Social changes in Greater Poland favored the final formation of the intelligentsia as a stratum, and the greater freedom of speech than in the Kingdom or Galicia made it easier to introduce a wider plan of action.

Thus a new stratum, the intelligentsia, undertook a new program—organic work.¹¹ In the conditions of the Prussian partition one could begin—although with difficulty—the extensive building of legal institutions, which were to bring together the endeavors of individuals, to give them more strength and ensure efficiency. Although the Prussian authorities did not agree to the foundation of the Central Society of Agriculture encompassing the whole of Greater Poland, a network of local agricultural societies came into being, whilst the whole of the province was embraced by the Society of Educational Help. Founded in 1841, it was granting scholarships to young people of poor background. Two years later the Bazaar in Poznań was opened ceremoniously. It consisted of a hotel, a casino and a shopping

arcade, and it was set up not for profit but for the support of Polish economic and cultural life in the capital of the Grand Duchy of Poznań.

The *spiritus movens* of these initiatives was the Poznań medic Karol Marcinkowski. Eminent activists of the organic work soon appeared by his side; the landowners Gustaw Potworowski and Dezydery Chłapowski were active in the Gostyń Casino, while Edward Raczyński, a member of the well-known aristocratic family, was an honored collector and publisher of monuments of Polish literature. Amongst the organic work movement in Greater Poland two tendencies can be discerned: the moderate one linked with the name of Marcinkowski and a more radical one connected with the personage of Karol Libelt. The differences in the programs and social composition of the two groups were not significant.

Philosophical and theoretical justifications for the organic work program in Greater Poland were provided by August Cieszkowski and the above-mentioned Karol Libelt. Cieszkowski, more conservative, came from a rich noble family, while Libelt, closer to the liberal-democratic views, came from townspeople of German origin. They both produced complicated philosophical systems, but Cieszkowski was a deeper and more original philosopher, whilst Libelt was described by Andrzej Walicki as a “philosophizing journalist.”¹² They were both occupied with the current social, economic and political problems, perceiving at the same time a close affinity between philosophical and political concepts. They both believed in the Kingdom of God on earth, but its coming was to be a gradual process achieved through growth of civilization, not by a revolution. The philosophy of both, especially that of Cieszkowski, was to sanctify, “to give a divine nature” to the sphere of everyday life, to lift the commonplace to the rank of the ideal and to find for it a place in the great plans of God.

The Kingdom also experienced an intellectual enlivenment, although on a smaller scale. Already at the end of the 30s, a group of nobles was formed around Count Andrzej Zamoyski. Their aim was the modernization of the agriculture and they debated on the most beneficial way of solving the peasant question. The assemblies of the nobility at the Zamoyski Estate in Klemensów became an informal institution, while from 1842 a periodical began to come out, entitled *Roczniki Gospodarstwa Krajowego* (The Annals of the National Economy).

Biblioteka Warszawska (The Warsaw Library), a monthly initiated a year earlier in Warsaw, had a wider scope. Without declaring affiliations, it favored the moderate version of organic work. More radical, but in effect restricting its interest to theoretical and philosophical matters was the

Przegląd Naukowy (Educational Review) published by Hipolit Skimborowicz. There was a visible spiritual link between these various magazines in the Polish Kingdom and the Duchy of Poznań, and texts, authors and ideas wandered between the various centers; therefore, in spite of a certain heterogeneity of the centers and ideas, the social thought of the advocates of legal and moderate progress on the eve of the 1848 Revolution can be reconstructed.

Already in the first year of its existence, the *Przewodnik Rolniczo-Przemysłowy* was concerned with a key problem: "We live in an era of boundless change [...]. Formerly, countries and individuals could seclude themselves [...] run their economy as they wished. Today skills, trade, and even politics are so accessible that they link all people, they make everyone compete with each other; and those who do not want to join in the race are left behind. It is difficult for the latecomers to find nourishment behind such a great mass of runners."¹³

Before the November uprising the Polish liberals saw the most important breakthrough of their era in the victorious march of the ideals of "liberality" and Enlightenment. Now, in the 1840s, they still believed that their epoch was a turning point; but they ascribed this decisive character to the economic changes rather than to the growth of political liberty. Up to this time the conservatives criticized these changes, while the liberals viewed them optimistically. Now, however, the Westernizers themselves saw more clearly that capitalism brings the Polish society both an opportunity and a terrifying possibility of "falling out of the game."

How then to avoid the fate of the latecomers?

Above all, society must be convinced of the necessity and purpose of economic development; convinced that (contrary to the traditional teachings of moralists) "decay does not grow and widen through increase in wealth, but it often spreads in the inverse ratio to the increase of material wealth," since the "physical world [...] is strictly linked with the spiritual world,"¹⁴ to the extent that even luxury cannot now be blamed. "What formerly our ancestors called luxury and elegance [...], today we consider our first [...] necessities [...]. Whether this is good or bad for the morals, let philosophers decide; as for us, we prefer to dress in beautiful, smooth, costly fabric than cover ourselves in thick homespun wool; to live in a beautiful and comfortable house, than in a loghouse [...]; we prefer sugar [...] than honey, so praised in the ancient world [...]. The endeavor to improve existence [...] through work and industry [...] seems to us the most efficient impulse which keeps in motion the entire machinery of today's civilization."¹⁵

Cieszkowski many times emphasized the moral dimension of the endeavor towards prosperity, and the specific synthesis of morals and economics is visible in journalism, too. Philosophical investigations in the *Przewodnik Rolniczo-Przemyslow* and *Roczniki Gospodarstwa Krajowego* were published on the same pages with professional advice such as “On the Manure,” “On using liquid fertilizers” or “To cut the chaff or not to cut the chaff?” What is more interesting is that both aspects appear side by side more than once, as if in the opinion of the authors they were perfectly complementary. Henryk Kamiński criticized the enemies of “this century’s endeavor to materialism”—people who “in that which is purely material cannot notice a strong development of the human spirit, one of the highest views which the world of thought can present to us.”

This same Kamiński devoted a large part of the first volume of his *Filozofia ekonomii materialnej* (Philosophy of Material Economics) to the justification of the thesis that “individual interest” is the most important motor of development. In spite of the fears of the conservatives, it does not lead to the atomization of society, because the “individual interest of every person is above all to live in society [...] The idea of general interest has, therefore, as its executor [...] the interest of the individual.”

In the second volume of his *Filozofia ekonomii* Kamiński introduces certain concepts that are close to socialist ones. He writes about “the right to work” for every person, about the “use of a person by a person” and he is opposed to the economic “indirect constraint,” which he finds as dangerous as “direct” constraints of physical power. Even then the individualist vision of society stays intact; the right to work is the result of the optimistic conviction of the classical school that demand for labor will never cease, whereas the criticized “indirect compulsion” does not have anything in common with the economy of free competition. According to Kamiński, the opposite is true: indirect compulsion is the result of suppressing the competition by “exclusivism”—the old enemy of all Polish liberals.¹⁶

Theoreticians of economics had no doubt that—in the words of Libelt—“the natural condition of the social existence of man on earth is property [...] On the moon or on the planets, if we could get to them, man would put down his claim for ownership.”¹⁷ Kamiński agreed with him without reservations, also acknowledging private property as the basis for the development of the economy.¹⁸

The tendency to educate belongs, writes Ryszarda Czepulis, to the principal threads of social journalism in Poland of the 40s and 50s of the nineteenth century. This tendency could at times mean conservative moraliz-

ing; it could also be an indication of moral indignation typical of the middle class. It could, however, also result from a conviction about the reformability of the world and from belief in the efficiency of rational persuasion and, in this version, it belongs to the basic components of liberal thought. These different motives, of course, intermingled in practice. The group clustered around Andrzej Zamoyski specially mixed the elements of the conservative and liberal traditions into a view whose coherence is not disturbed by its eclectic sources.¹⁹

In the journalism of Andrzej Zamoyski's supporters there dominates an endeavor to modernize the agriculture and to rebuild the mentality of the gentry in the spirit of a respect for work and for honestly acquired wealth. At the same time the enlightened gentry feared social changes in the countryside, not wanting to allow a rise in the social mobility of the peasantry and wanting to keep, even in changed circumstances, the domination of the manor. Popular education was to instill into the peasants a knowledge of modern methods of farming, and also—which is interesting—to widen their everyday needs, thus providing the motivation to more effective farming. An ideal peasant should, however, complete his education in the village school, stay throughout his life in his enclosure and accept his social position.

The dominant role of the manor in the village was to be matched—in the eyes of the landed gentry in Andrzej Zamoyski's circle—with the superior role of the landowners in the country as a whole. The towns play a marginal role in their ideology, and economic modernization has to refer above all to agriculture. Similarly to the earlier period, the liberally sounding praises of private property accompany the statements that the most valuable sort of private property is land ownership which—as written in Greater Poland—“ties the person to his country most keenly [...]; the more landowners there are, the more moral and material guarantees” of stable development can be expected.²⁰ Poland was to accept capitalist economy while retaining, as far as possible, the hitherto existing social structure.

Whether it proclaimed the slogan of organic development or rapid industrialization, Polish economic thought of the nineteenth century saw roughly two basic reasons for the economic backwardness. Firstly, it emphasized the lack of capital. Economists perceived this phenomenon in the whole of Central and Eastern Europe and it was not by accident that the main work of István Széchenyi, the great Hungarian pioneer of organic work is entitled *Hitel* (Credit) (although its subject matter goes far beyond the economic problems). The second way of thinking emphasized the role

of institutions such as a modern system of law, transportation, communications, public safety, a certain minimal level of education indispensable for the rational undertaking of economic decisions. Both these concepts alternated with each other, but there is a certain pattern in their occurrence. The “institutional” approach dominated in the era of the Duchy of Warsaw and in the first years of the Kingdom under the undoubted influence of German “*Polizeiwissenschaft*.” Later, under the influence of the classical school, the emphasis was rather on the lack of capital. Both approaches balanced each other in the second half of the century, although in the Russian partition, after 1863, due to the existence of the harsh police regime, the postulate of self-education had to suffice for the whole reform of the institutional sphere. In the 40s, it would seem, the lack of capital was seen as a key issue.

“Money is a hundred times more powerful than any steam horse [...] it turns and pushes the whole social machine;” when it was lacking, help was seen in the development of various credit institutions. The idea of credit—the creation of money “from nothing,” as equal in value to goods which have not yet been produced—seemed something worthy of admiration, almost mystical. Especially fascinating was the possibility of joining the concept of credit with that of association—so that the petty savings of poor people collected together would form a power making possible the establishment of financial institutions which, in turn—issuing bonds and shares—would multiply them even further. Societies and associations will exert a charitable influence on human souls, advertising forms of solidarity and cooperation. In this way, economic and moral development will support each other.

Cieszkowski came out with an impractical idea of a new type of bonds that would replace both money, and hitherto existing bonds and shares. The new papers would be emitted and guaranteed by the state, and accepted by it for the repayment of duties—at the same time they would be percentaged, so they would bring in an income, similarly to stocks or mortgage deeds.²¹ Other authors developed more practical solutions. It was proposed to establish saving banks for the poorest and credit associations that were to grant loans to the gentry or to the small capitalists. At the side of the Gostyń Casino a department was created in 1838 to support urban craft and industry, placing amongst its aims the collecting and availing of information about the development of craft and industry abroad, bringing books to the library in Gostyń in cooperation with the agronomic association in Gniezno; a nursery and garden school were planned in Gostyń,

studies were carried out about the possibility of drying out the Odra River marshes and the establishment of an industrial school in Poznań.²² These main directions of the activities of “organic work” in Prussian Poland in the 1840s determined, in essence, the core of the social programs of Polish liberalism up to the First World War.

A great deal of attention was devoted to roads and rails; it is worth mentioning that the role of the latter was seen above all as the transportation of passengers, not goods. Exhibitions of agricultural and industrial products were organized. These were to enliven farming contacts and encourage competition. Horse races, under the pompous name of the *Costyń Games*, were to serve the widespreading of more noble breeds and new methods of breeding.

In the general estimation of the development of capitalism, optimism was undoubtedly stronger in the region of Poznań where activists of organic work more fully and more univocally supported capitalist industrialization than did the gentry in the circle of Andrzej Zamoyski. Karol Libelt in 1841 with great enthusiasm presented the argumentation of a certain German economist—the popularizer of the views of Jean Baptiste Say. It is not true that machines will make the workers poorer because all those freed from work by mechanization will find work in building further machines. Simonde de Sismondi is mistaken fearing a crisis of overproduction: the demand rises with the rise in supply. “This is where education is heading: to creep into even more distant recesses of the country and to improve the material existence of every inhabitant, so that every worker lives in a comfortable home, not under a thatched roof, and where today some scrawl of gaudy paints hang over his poor bed, there shall be a solid room with a collection of beautiful paintings. [...] Much yet is lacking before it comes to this”—but the direction of development is marked out.

This ideal has already become reality in the United States. There the enlightened worker will not go to work if he does not get enough pay, “to be able—apart from satisfying the indispensable needs of life—to indulge in his pleasures. [...] From this the conclusion is obvious: poverty and degradation of people working in factories are not necessary conditions of their existence, but they are the effect of abuse of the newly rich owners, and mostly a result of their own non-education.”

Libelt is convinced of the correctness of the theory of international exchange created by David Ricardo. Taxes are harmful because nations “by the exchange of goods enrich each other.” He is also convinced, contrary to the above-mentioned gentry publicists, that the development of industry

leads to the wealth of the country, which, however, does not mean at all that agriculture can be neglected: simply the development of industry testifies that agriculture “must be very productive” when it is able to feed the factory workers.

Libelt enriches these arguments, drawn from a German book, with his own conclusions. “Time is money”—if society and authorities in the Grand Duchy of Poznań understood this truth, the number of church holidays would be reduced and the “inactivity of so many thousands of prisoners would be remedied: why cannot the prisons [...], to whose upkeep the taxpayer must contribute, be changed into reformatories through work, through which the prisoner could upkeep both himself and the whole administration of the house?” These words, as though taken from the lips of some English or American Protestant, find support in the interesting enumeration of losses: “Calculating in the Grand Duchy of Poznań 500 000 persons capable of working and 75 000 work-horses, the work of a person calculated at only 3 silver coins daily, that of a horse calculated at 10, the pure loss from non-earning in the national holidays brings a million thalers annually.”

Libelt, convinced by the German popularizers of the classical school, did not differentiate potential and effective demand: he believed that there will be so many buyers for all the products that every pair of hands in the labor market would find employment. His reasoning does make sense only then, otherwise the annulment of holidays, the employment of prisoners and other methods of enlarging the work force would cause only a fall in the workers pay.

In his enthusiasm for capitalism, Libelt moves onto the concept of the annulment of inheritance because only personal savings and work should establish a person’s position in society.²³ The liberal faith in the might of the individual and their ability in benefiting from the social mobility prompted by capitalism went so far that it became its own contradiction demanding the limitation of private property, although Libelt himself acknowledged it as the foundation of social life.

Even when the liberals noticed new problems, they considered them painful to be sure, but solvable: “the present European pauperism [...] appears to be the simple and indispensable result of the previous great wars” which deepened the contrast in property ownership. “Through the introduction of an ordered industrial freedom” and action towards the “moral and intellectual education of the people,” the European states set out on the road of the gradual elimination of poverty and, maybe, even its abolishment.²⁴

Sometimes an effort was made at a deeper diagnosis. There appeared—probably for the first time in Polish literature—discussions about the change from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft*, showing how liberal freedom can become simultaneously a blessing and a curse. According to Aleksander Kurc the social problem relies not only on material poverty because with time this can be done away with; “the feature of our century is the ever increasing liberation of man [...]. The direct patriarchal dependency to which, for various reasons, care and help were linked, begins to [...] disappear; everyone looks after themselves, [...] and just as everyone is allowed to grow rich from their own work, so no one has the right to profit from the work of another person. The privileges of the guilds [...] that had once given such moral care and material help for the poor, fell [...]. The spirit of our century gives every person complete social emancipation”—but at the same time “every [...] person, rich or poor, ignorant or enlightened, will be left to themselves.”

The bad effects of changes can, however, be limited because “one of the most beautiful assets of the civilization of our century is the tendency of every educated person to help and care for the poor and ignorant.”²⁵ What we encounter here, is not paternalistic philanthropy—in the same year that Kurc’s article appeared, August Cieszkowski wrote: “The principle of *laissez faire* and *laissez passer* is not less sterile in politics than in economics [...] Let us rather apply the term *laissez passer* to itself. Let the essential principle be: helping the development of national life, acting on society not with clamps or prohibitions, but with positive organic institutions.”²⁶ The principle of subsidiarity, whose main ideological representative in Poland at that time was Cieszkowski, is also present in Kurc: “We should facilitate such endeavors and attempts amongst the poor and ignorant class of people that would aim at independent material property.” The best means is the development of saving banks, which (besides the obvious economic function) give their members a feeling of community, of which the unlimited free market would have deprived them.

Still, the saving banks faced the problem how to assure the greatest safety for their capital consisting of the small life savings of a great number of people. Kurc dissuaded investing in state stocks: sometimes it could happen that the state announces bankruptcy. As certain way, he recommended the purchase of stocks issued by the societies of land credit because the “value and productivity of the land will never be annihilated,” and so the value of the stocks, having coverage in landed property, cannot be shaken, irrespective of any political, economical or social crisis.²⁷ Kurc

is absolutely sure that private property is inviolable: state institutions can fail, but landed property will always bring an income. One can see here deep convictions about the stability of basic social institutions; convictions that are the key elements of a phenomenon often described as the fundamental optimism of nineteenth-century mentality.

This optimism, as is known, found a powerful ally in the idea of progress, so triumphally, it would seem, blossoming in the nineteenth century. The concept of progress, initially used also in the plural and always with an explanation like “progress of sciences,” meant in the first quarter of the century every development or change for the better. Only with time did it acquire the meaning of directed, and to some degree necessary, development. Kamiński uses the term “progress” in this sense. In this era, the former, more general meaning often occurred side by side with the newer, historiosophical one.

The content attributed to the concept of progress was never univocal: even in the twentieth century the “progress” of the liberals was very different from the “progress” of the socialists. In the second half of the nineteenth century, however, there occurred a certain unification of the meanings associated with this term. Meanwhile, still in the 1840s (at least in Polish literature) every author could attribute to it various meanings, according to their views on the nature of the historical process. Hence Karol Libelt in 1843 could still incite his readers to agree to the “apparently anti-progressive image of the ruling religion,” very deftly deducing this demand from the fundamentals of his liberal-democratic ideas. Just as the freedom of proclaiming of any political views does not change the fact that the government can in practise only realize one political concept, in the same way full religious tolerance does not contradict the acknowledgement of one ruling religion. Libelt’s concept (atypical of contemporary liberal thought) ties up with his historiosophic convictions about the future unity of the state, nation and religion. However, already a dozen or so years later such a view would be univocally seen as conservative; romanticism was the last moment when such ideas could be acknowledged as the indication of progressive thought.²⁸

The concept of progress embraced not only economic and social matters, but also political ones; a question therefore arises about the political content of Polish liberalism of the 1840s. In spite of the very limited freedom of speech, such content existed, especially in the Prussian Partition. *Tygodnik Literacki* praised the emigrant democrats and attacked the Czarotorski camp. It criticized the so-called coterie of St. Petersburg—a conser-

vative group led by the writer Henryk Rzewuski. The *Biblioteka Warszawska* also criticized Rzewuski, accusing him amongst other things of an exaggerated reluctance to the philosophy of the Enlightenment.²⁹

The *Tygodnik Literacki*, before it went through an evolution in a radical-democratic direction, often wrote on subjects that belonged to the center of interests of nineteenth-century liberal political thought. It wrote therefore about the necessity of “social reforms,” it discussed the concepts of the eminent German legal theorist Karl Rotteck, fully sharing his view that the society will be able to feel “love, worship and respect” for the statute law only when it is based on the natural law. (This view is worth noting in the light of an ever-increasing tendency of contemporary German philosophy of law towards legal positivism.)³⁰

The texts of Karol Libelt stand out among the philosophical-political journalism of the Prussian partition. Seeing public opinion as the main leverage of progress, Libelt is a typical representative of his era. The liberals of the 1840s already know that public opinion is not merely the sum of the opinions of individuals, that it is shaped during the actual process of expressing views, in controversies and debates; that freedom of speech is not so much the condition of *expressing* an opinion, as of its actual *existence*. They know also that the condition for its development is the development of education. At the same time, similarly to the previous generation, they are full of optimism in the estimation of its role. “An opinion is the criticism of human matters, and no meanness, pretence or incompetence can stand against it on the public arena; it is a court, in which the whole nation sits and before its highest tribunal judges individuals and authorities [...]. All strength and physical power is broken against this spiritual might.”

The development of public opinion is—if one is allowed to use a term that was not known to the Poznań “organic work” activists—tantamount with the development of political culture, that is, with the spread of patterns of behavior indispensable to life in a modern state and with the understanding of the mechanisms of its activity. It is this very education to a life in a free society that forms the subject of Libelt’s study *O odwadze cywilnej* (On civil courage)—courage which (unlike the war heroism) “is within the power of every person”.

Without freedom a society will not develop a respect within itself for the law. An imposing example of such a freedom is England. Even in the face of chartist rebellions, the civil rights were respected. An indispensable condition for the development of public opinion is the freedom of expression.

“Freedom of press, just as freedom of speech, is only a different form of freedom of thought, and is a natural human right. [...] No one who wishes to say something will send it first for censorship but instead they pay for bad language with their own person and property. It should be the same with print, the responsibility of the author or publisher should be introduced instead of censorship.”³¹ The freedom of press, the public character of judicial trials and trial by jury are the main factors furthering the development of civil courage.³² Let us remember that about a generation earlier Wincenty Niemojowski formulated a similar triad, acknowledging the freedom of press, personal freedom and trial by jury as the basis of political freedom.

As seen from the above, in Prussia it was possible to demand the freedom of opinion in the 1840s; it was decidedly harder, however, to introduce a plan to change the political system. Here it was often necessary to resort to indirect allusions. The fundamental liberal postulate of “equality before the law in civil and political matters” appeared only sporadically.³³

Libelt in the “Rok 1845,” as though speaking of ancient views, evidently wrote about his own time. In the steps of Aristotle he differentiated two forms of democracy: both assure all the citizens full political rights, but whilst one of them respects the rule of law, the other rejects it and leaves all decisions to the people. Whilst the first “edifies the lower strata of society by allowing them to take part in administering state affairs, in which, however, ability and merit take precedence, and laws and the authorities are respected,” the second, simple demagoguery, “lowering the social superiority of ability and merit and using an abstract equalizer, leads to the degradation of the nation and flatters the passions of the incompetent mass.” “The principle of democracy is virtue,” repeats Libelt after Montesquieu.³⁴

Sympathy for parliamentarism could be expressed indirectly, by way of describing the respect for law that exists in those countries “where legislation is in the hands of a constitutional body.” Libelt expressed a view that was not new—it had been present in Polish thought from the time of the Kalisz Group—claiming that loyal opposition is indispensable for the correct functioning of the state. The Poznań liberals tried to suggest that they were a progressive but not revolutionary factor that it is “better for that government which, according to this barometer [of public opinion] fulfils the interests of the country and on time detracts threatening storms than where there is no public opinion, it lies hidden and fermenting deep inside the heart.”³⁵ The *Przewodnik Rolniczo-Przemysłowy* quoted on first page the words of Archduke John,³⁶ the liberalizing member of the Habsburg

dynasty, who remained in slight opposition to the Metternich's system, about the necessity and inevitability of progress.

The Poznań supporters of "organic work" accepted much from Western liberal thought. The influence of the German liberalism is worth noting: they may have been the reason why the liberals from Prussian Poland paid so much attention to the immaterial needs of the people and to the development of the "concept of the dignity of man."³⁷ They are also responsible for the rule of law as well as some idealization of the state. "The state, being the most beautiful world which has appeared on the face of the earth, the highest result of the human spirit, is the most powerful monument with which the social man has celebrated the power and omnipotence of God." These words come from an article that discusses the importance of the free press for the development of political freedom and therefore belongs to the field of liberal interests. Also, according to Karol Libelt, "the country should be a mother to everybody, and the government a father."³⁸ This idealization of the state has a rather different sound than the analogical attitude of the times of the Duchy of Warsaw, which derived rather from the French tradition and was linked with the hope of using the state as a tool for modernization from above.

The national problem could not be discussed openly under censorship; we can at most find literary and scientific texts dedicated to the history of Poland and to the traditions of the Polish nobility. What is more important is that under the influence of romantic thought there developed a way of seeing the world—or at least Europe—as a collection of individual nations (before the November uprising only the kernel of this outlook existed). The concept of nation remains unprecise: the mutual relationship of the concepts of nation, nationality, language, state and motherland is not completely clear. The attempt at clearing this tangle was undertaken by Karol Libelt in his dissertation *O miłości ojczyzny* (On the love of the motherland) (1843), but was not quite successful. This work does, however, show a few typical elements of the liberals' attitude to the national question. First, the greater the number of landowners, the greater the number of conscious members of the nation; the aim should therefore be to widen the class of small landowners. Second, the nation is an integrative institution, created on the ruins of the estate structure. This reluctance to particularism pushed Libelt so far as to the criticism of the middle class; answering reproaches he later explained that he was afraid that any excessive emphasis of the separateness of any social class might make the longed-for integration of society difficult.³⁹

Finally—although the argumentation of Libelt, dividing the ideal of the motherland into nine “subparts” is not completely clear—it is clearly apparent that the concept of “nation” is coming closer to the concept of “state” on the one hand and “language” on the other. There is not yet talk here about a monoethnic national state, but from the perspective of the later evolution we can detect a certain preparation of the ground for these ideas. In any case the nation is a spiritual individuality with its own psychological and physical features. Understood in this way, it starts to be seen by the Polish liberals as the basic category of the European politics. This understanding of the concept of nation will last throughout the whole 19th and a large part of the twentieth century.

“It is a general rule of the development of history that every nation, which has risen high above others, had to fulfil a certain great mission for the good of all humanity,” wrote an anonymous author in 1845.⁴⁰ A similar attitude of “international nationalism” shows itself also in the sympathy of the Polish press to the Slav problem: *Rok* and *Tygodnik Literacki* show interest in problems of Czechs and Slovaks and criticize the suppression of national minorities in Hungary. At the same time a respect for the idea of nationality in general and for the symptoms of national self-consciousness awakening among the peoples did not hinder the Poles in outlining the limits of the Polish nation over a wide expanse, acknowledging as Poles all the inhabitants of the former Commonwealth. One can perhaps discern in this the old idea of the noble political nation, now democratized and widened to include all social strata. Romantic historicism assuming the historical territory as an integral component of the definition of a nation played its role as well. One can also see here a reluctance towards territorial particularism attacked by the advocates of modernization as sharp as estate particularism. This way of thinking, identifying in the Jacobin spirit all the endeavors at decentralization with reaction, was, however, a feature of democratic radicalism.

The romantic sympathy for Slavonic “awakening” was of course linked with the rejection of pro-Russian slavophile ideas: *Tygodnik Literacki* assured the “German Brothers” that they could always count on “progressive Slavs” in the battle against the “Northern colossus.”⁴¹

“German Brothers”—these words did not fall by chance. In the best romantic tradition the intellectuals from Prussian Poland of the 1840s were convinced that the common interest of the nations demands a mutual closer relationship, and the widening of the sphere of freedom in the Prussian state will benefit both the Poles and the Germans. The faith (deriving

from as back as Herder) in the mission proper to every nation obliged to see in each nation the admirable work of Providence. In literature, religion and the fine arts “a great national apotheosis is taking place,” said Karol Libelt in his lectures on German literature. Thanks to its culture “above the worldliness and the relationships of everyday life, the nation rises to heaven with the beaming spirit of its own countenance, in a pure, snow-white vestment [...] Man, astounded and full of respect, looks in wonder just as the three apostles did on Mount Tabor.”

“True,” said Libelt in another lecture, “here, on the Warta numerous Polish–German conflicts had to occur in the course of history. It is wrong if we transfer into the spiritual realm that which time and vested interest brings with itself.” Meanwhile “The Germans had a better idea of India and China than of Poland [...]. Poland, in turn, [...] did not ask for education in the neighboring Germany, but reached beyond it to France and Italy for learning and inspiration.” Now, however, the situation begins to change: “Posterity [...] casts the blinkers from its eyes which came about either from bias or from reluctance. On the banks of the Seine, Spree and Oder chairs of Slavonic culture are being established, the translations of our writings are getting more numerous and more common. The Slavs, on the other hand, not only get educated in Germany but also write in German. Tribal envy stops wherever the light of reason enters. Peoples of various tribes are beginning to respect each other and to recognize each other’s worth.”⁴²

Poles, as well as Germans—we all “belong to one era, one generation, taken up by the lively endeavor to form public relationships on the basis of a free reason,” said Karol Marcinkowski in the Poznań City Council in 1845. “If formerly [...] political speculations [...] aimed at increasing one’s powers by acquiring ever more square miles of one’s neighbors, today the politics of the nations is clearing a way for itself based on the law of nations as the safest guarantee for one’s own immunity. This great progress was created by industry, trade, communications, and by creating associations of capital, intellectual, and material forces that push the world forward. Do we have to remain so far behind only because our town is torn apart by the pitiable rivalry of national groups?”⁴³

Thus romantic faith in the community of free nations interlaps with the liberal faith that progress shows every nation (as well as every individual) the road to development without harming others.

The Revolution of 1848 in Central and Eastern Europe was an echo of the upheavals in France and Italy. Much to the surprise of everybody, the governments in Vienna and Berlin surrendered almost without resistance,

promising constitutions and all liberties. The spring of 1848 passed under a sign of great hope for the liberal intellectuals in German and Austrian lands. The awakening, therefore, was even ruder: the Revolution of 1848 became a sort of test, “the hour of truth” for the liberals and democrats who could at last confront their ideals with reality.⁴⁴

The democrats and liberals in the Poznań region and in Galicia are a perfect example of revolutionary illusions and disappointments. “Poland has risen from the dead!”—the headline of the first issue of the *Gazeta Polska* (Polish Newspaper) proclaimed on the 22 March 1848. This was the newly formed newspaper of the Poznań liberals (initially edited by Hipolit Cegielski, later by Marcei Motty). “The Revolution was accomplished in a few days in Paris, despotism fell, coercion and treason was replaced by love and justice, [...] the people have been victorious and have chosen, as the law of their own authority and rule, ‘liberty, equality and brotherhood’.” This is the end of history, the beginning of the chiliastic era, the third and final era in the history of the world. Christianity first introduced the rule of brotherly love. The Great French Revolution wanted to achieve a “Christian spirit” with terrorist methods: it had reason, but “renounced love.” It is only the present revolution in France which is the testimony that mankind has fully matured “not only in mind, but also in love” and is capable of “realizing real Christianity on earth, [...] to build lasting sanctuaries of equality, freedom and brotherhood.”

The world will be better. “The future of Poland is already decided. [...] All people are equal—and so all people must be free. Since nations are the work of God, they [...] cannot be put under a yoke, but they should be free and independent.” Europe will be republican because constitutional monarchies “are only a cease-fire between a revolution and despotism, [...] they are temporary governments. Today the spirit of the people has changed, everything is returning to its natural order, peoples aim to unite in their own nationalities.” The crusade of republican Europe against Russia would rebuild an independent Poland.

The texts from the first issues of the *Gazeta Polska* can serve as a model that indicates the awareness of the participants of the first phase of a revolution when the experience of great changes in the world and in individuals is widespread: it seems that there is a continuous holiday and that it will last for ever. “Yesterday elapsed just as the day before [...] joyfully and happily for the inhabitants of the town [of Poznań]. Greater freedom, trust and courage marks every face.” The article written four weeks after the Paris revolution exudes the same spirit:

“Throughout the century-long span of history there has never been anything like these four weeks [...]. They are four weeks of historical miracle. [...]. The blind hatred of the peoples is being replaced by brotherhood. [...] An enemy becomes a friend, an oppressor becomes a savior.

A German summons Poland out of the grave.

Our national standard flies in Berlin—in Berlin whose population, aroused by the sincere enthusiasm for justice and freedom, calls with a thousand voices: Poland has not died!”⁴⁵

There is no doubt that similar statements are not the elements of propaganda, but express an authentic state of mind. A Galician nobleman and amateur historian, Aleksander Batowski, a reasonable and sensible man, 49 years old in 1848–49, wrote in his diary in a biblical tone: “In these few days we have lived through a whole century. [...] the hour of punishment has struck [...]; tyranny has been allowed to tread on the holy brotherly unions of peoples for too long. [...] Today the whole of Europe regenerates itself, in the course of a month a powerful throne has fallen, and others totter or are going to fall [...] Conceit has been brought down and rolls in dust. [...] A new era has arrived in the world, and Poles—who in two uprisings and continuous martyrdom gave a sign to the peoples of Europe that their nationality continues to live [...]—will not be forgotten.”⁴⁶

The first days of the revolution in the Poznań region seemed to confirm the belief that the only enemies of nations were the reactionary governments. The slogans of the independence of Poland raised during the Berlin demonstration of March 18, 1848, as well as the liberation—on the demand of the demonstrators—of the Polish prisoners condemned to death—Karol Libelt and Ludwik Mierosławski amongst them—had to confirm the notion that an era of Polish–German brotherhood is dawning. The first issue of the *Gazeta Polska* published Libelt’s letter from Berlin; the author appealed for friendliness to “our brothers of the German nation because they obtained our freedom with their own blood on the barricades of Berlin [...] and please God they will give help to our Polish cause.”

Soon the horizon darkened. Tensions between the Poles and Germans, as well as mutual accusations of hostility and abandoning the highest ideals of freedom, appeared already in early March. Instead of the autonomy for the Grand Duchy of Poznań there was now only talk of its division into Polish and German parts, with Poznań belonging to the German part. Irregular forces organized in March in the hope of a war with Russia (to be commanded by Mierosławski, always convinced of his own military talents), were disarmed by the Prussians in bloody battles. As a result, the one-sided

enthusiasm was replaced by an equally one-sided despondence. "In the beginning there were calls from all sides: let us endeavor to gain the friendship of nations, this friendship will save us," the *Gazeta Polska* wrote on the May 27. "Slav peoples, sneer at the friendship of the West [...] trust nobody, believe nobody. Take from us a living example. This friendship has been killing us throughout the last 70 years!"

In Austria the dynamics of events was similar. The Viennese revolution overthrew Metternich; the centralist constitution imposed in March satisfied nobody and the Austrian Diet assembled in the summer began long debates about its change. While radicals continually aroused street fights, liberals put their hope in Parliament. In March 1848 it seemed that the division was clear: in Vienna and in Lwów, as in Berlin and Poznań, freedom stood up against the despotism of "reaction." In the first half of April Aleksander Batowski was still full of optimism.

Soon, however, it became apparent that the conflict between the despotic authority and the liberal opposition was blended with the conflict between rivaling nations. Weaker nationalities considered the threat from Vienna less dangerous than the threat from the stronger neighbors. So, the Czechs were afraid of the Germans, the Ukrainians of the Poles, and the weaker nations of the Hungarian crown of the Hungarians. In effect all of them gave support to the Viennese court in the hope that the reformed Austria will assure them the best conditions for development. In this way, in 1848 the Poles in the Austrian Partition had to face the modern nationality question for the first time in their history. Besides the Polish national movement there appeared a quickly maturing and even more self-conscious Ukrainian movement. Polish thought was totally unprepared for such a development, repeating dogmas of the return to the boundaries of 1772.⁴⁷ In a similar way the German elite in Bohemia was taken by surprise by the development of Czech national aspirations.

With the news of the Viennese revolution the National Council, the chief organ of Galician Poles, was formed in Lwów; similar institutions were also formed by the elites of other nations of the monarchy. Its press organ was the magazine *Rada Narodowa* (The National Council) which after two months changed its name to *Gazeta Narodowa* (The National Newspaper). Its editor was Jan Dobrzański who was to play a major role in the history of the liberal Galician press. The *Gazeta Narodowa* was in constant battle with the *Dziennik Narodowy* (National Daily) established a few weeks earlier; both newspapers accused each other of a "reactionary" attitude, although in reality both represented the same liberal-democratic direction.

Dobrzański was influenced by the views expressed by the Polish Democratic Society; an activist of the Society, Wiktor Heltman (a co-worker of the *Dekada Polska* from 1820) was in Lwów and was in contact with Dobrzański in 1848.⁴⁸

Besides the ethnic conflict, the main problem in Galicia was the peasant question inflamed by the so-called “Galician slaughter” of 1846. Freedom of speech allowed a clear pronouncement of the political aspect of the matter: it is about, “how to deal with the peasants in order to gain their trust and favorable attitude.”⁴⁹ Contrary to appearances, this is by no means conservative solidarism: we have to remember that in 1848 it was not at all clear whether it would be possible to create even the minimal feeling of community between the landlords and the “peasants;” without such feeling society cannot function. Since the Ruthenian (i.e. Ukrainian) peasants were beginning to think of themselves as a separate nation, why could not then the “Mazurian” i.e. Western-Galician, Polish-speaking peasants create their own national consciousness? In such case the nobility and the intelligentsia would remain the only bearers of Polishness in Galicia.

It was necessary to counteract this danger. The national program of liberals (not only Polish) envisaged the use of patriotic slogans in order to accomplish the integration of society: since the liberals could not use the non-existent Polish state structures as a tool of modernization and centralization (as the enlightened radicals from the time of the Duchy of Warsaw wanted to do), the national idea had to suffice. The mood of the romantic era was helpful here, surrounding national concepts with an aura of secrecy and mysticism. The liberals of the 1840s were sincerely influenced by romanticism and their patriotic enthusiasm is beyond suspicion. However, they understood the national idea in a completely different way than many romantics (radical revolutionists, conservatives, or even those standing far from social problems) who were enthusiastic about the particular values and variety of folk culture. The liberals (even the romantics) seldom acknowledged the variety of cultures as a value in itself (in this regard the words of Libelt, quoted earlier, are not quite typical); if they showed interest in folk culture it was because they saw in it a power capable of strengthening the homogeneous national culture.

This tendency towards the homogenization of national culture is clearly seen in the attitude both towards the peasant problem and the Ukrainian one. The democrats planned the voluntary abolition of serfdom by the nobles in order to draw the peasants into the Polish camp; the authorities forestalled this action, bringing down serfdom on their own initiative. The

Ukrainian question was passed with silence in the petition to Vienna issued by the National Council at the threshold of its office. It is no wonder that soon an analogical Ukrainian Council was established. The initiative was taken by the Greek Catholic clergy, so its activists were named “the Saint George party” (from the name of the Greek Catholic cathedral of Saint George in Lwów). The division of Galicia into an eastern and a western province was one of the main demands of the Ukrainians in 1848. Up to 1918 this will be one of the most controversial issues between Galician Poles and Ukrainians.

The attitude of Polish democrats and liberals to the Ukrainian question on the eve and during the 1848 Revolution can be presented as a proposal of a specific (never clearly formulated) deal, in which the Ukrainians would renounce their separate nationality in exchange for equality before the law and the participation in representative institutions in the future independent Poland, as well as for the abolition of serfdom. The Poles therefore demanded from the Ukrainians to acknowledge that “liberal ideas, which come from constitutional life, have priority over nationality”⁵⁰—in other words, that political freedom is more important than national freedom. A similar unwritten offer was also presented to national minorities by Hungarian liberals in their own country. Numerous individuals, being assimilated into Polishness, silently accepted these unwritten proposals and replenished the Polish national movement, but the solution of the national conflict in this way was of course impossible.

Many Poles in Eastern Galicia, gentry and intelligentsia, considered themselves “Ruthenian,” but only in the territorial sense: they believed that since their choice (assimilation to Polishness) is not contrary to their “Ruthenian” self-identification, the same way is open for anyone who considers themselves “Ruthenian.” They therefore saw the activities of the Ukrainian “national activists” as trouble-making, threatening harmony. “Poles and Ruthenes [...] seemingly mutually friendly and in agreement, harbor partially hidden hostile feelings to each other,” we read in the proclamation *Od Rady Narodowej do braci Rusinów* (From the National Council to Ruthene brothers) published in the newspaper *Rada Narodowa* of April 19, 1848. “These feelings should be fought against with all force [...] Ruthene brothers [...] we give to you our brotherly hand, take it with the open heart with which it is given. If we have not known each other, let us get to know each other, if we have been guilty against each other, let us forgive, let equality everywhere and in everything be our motto and aim.”

In these friendly, but insubstantial slogans there is not a single word about respecting a separate nationality. The constant emphasis that “related peoples [...] can find their strength [...] only in equality, unity and brotherhood,” draws the supposition that the authors could understand “brotherhood” with the Ruthenes as the granting of civil rights to them, but without acknowledging their separate nationality. “Just as France, Spain, Germany are each within themselves a single nation [...] so Poland was [...] not only one state but also one nation, although its components were inhabitants of Greater and Small Poland, Ruthenia, Lithuania, Samogitia and German Prussia and Livonia,” proclaims the declaration of the National Council of May 9, 1848 “We do not differ between ourselves as much as the Basque in France, an inhabitant of Languedoc, a Flemish or an inhabitant of Alsace.” Using France as an example in national matters had at the time only one meaning. The centralism of the French Revolution meant an obligatory assimilation. The text referred, it is true, to the respect for faiths and languages that was allegedly widespread in the old Commonwealth; it was not at all obvious, however, whether this historical ideal should be valid for the future.

A few days later an anonymous author had no doubts. “The dawn would have already started over our horizon if we managed to develop a unity amongst us.” Its development is being stopped by “Ruthenian” priests who are aiming towards the development of the “Ruthenian” language and culture, instead of teaching the people that “Mazovians, Lithuanians, Ruthenes, Poznanians”—are all Poles. “The problem of the Ruthenian language and nationality was raised by some at the wrong time and unreasonably. As creating discord and provincialism in the place of love and National Unity, it can be rightly seen as a mask covering the shreds of the hideous Pan-Slavism, that is the Moscovite yoke.” Józef Supiński wrote in a very similar fashion in the *Dziennik Narodowy*, explaining that the so-called Ruthenian language is in reality one of three Polish “dialects” (the others being “Mazovian” and “Kashubian”).⁵¹

At the time of the 1848 Revolution, a gradation of attitudes towards the national question emerged, not only amongst the Poles. It can be described in great over-simplification with the words “the more to the left, the stronger sympathy for centralization.” There existed, however, more moderate liberals inclined to respect the separateness of the “Ruthenes,” so long as they do not demand a separate state. Sometimes these liberals even called the Ruthenes a “nation,” but usually in a context so imprecise that it is difficult to say whether this means a separate nation equal to the Poles, or

one of the Polish “tribes.” “As regards the Ruthenian nation [...] we will not only hinder it, but we shall allow it, we shall let it develop,” said Aleksander Batowski at the meeting of the National Council of May 1, outlining a federal vision encompassing “the provinces of the former Polish Commonwealth, spreading across a large area of Central Europe with dialects and customs and internal life seemingly different, but strong and united in nationality and well conceived self-interest,” although they will not be “a solid nation such as Germany or France.” According to Batowski, “Lithuania, Ruthenia, Prussia, Mazovia, Small Poland and Greater Poland etc., all in their separate circles of customs, dialects, aims and relationships, are concentrated around the largest Polish nationality as worlds around the sun, they will mutually form a strong, inseparable unity.”⁵² From such foggy reasoning it is difficult to conclude about any concrete constitutional plans.

An attempt at settlement was brought by the Slavic Congress which took place in Prague in June 1848. Called together on the initiative of the Czechs, it was to be a congress of the Slavic nations of Austria debating over the federalization of the monarchy. Its range broadened, however, as a result of the participation of Poles from Poznań, as well as of the famous Russian revolutionist and anarchist Mikhail Bakunin. According to the organizers, the congress was to be a manifestation of the unity of Slavs and an ideological counterbalance for the German Parliament deliberating in Frankfurt. To this aim, however, it was necessary to silence inter-Slav quarrels: hence the pressure exerted by Czechs and other participants of the congress for a Polish-Ukrainian settlement.

Indeed, such a settlement materialized. The Polish and Ukrainian delegates agreed to a common participation in the “Galician section” of the Congress (with a division into “Polish” and “Ruthenian” parts) and worked out a common position in debatable matters. Galicia was to remain a single province, but with the full equality of both nations and languages, with the eventual possibility of its division into two administrative districts. Equality was to reach also symbolic areas (Polish and “Ruthenian” coats of arms on the caps of national guards). The Slav Congress did not finish its deliberations; it was dispersed by the Austrian army as a result of an uprising instigated in Prague by young radicals. The non-accomplished Polish-Ukrainian settlement testifies, however, to the fact that both sides were not yet incapable of a compromise and that shared liberal ideals could form a basis for successful negotiations.⁵³

The different orientations of Polish and Ukrainian national movements

in matters concerning the future of the Austrian monarchy additionally made the compromise difficult. Poles, similarly to Czechs, spoke about the federation, though they understood something totally different by it: they believed that the part of the monarchy belonging to the German Union will join united Germany under the scepter of the Habsburg dynasty, the Italian lands would go to the future united Italy, Hungary will form a separate kingdom joined with Germany only through a personal union, whereas Galicia will also remain under the Habsburg scepter as a self-governing province to the time when it will be able to return to a reborn Poland. In this way the “federalism” of Poles aimed at the break-up of the monarchy and the eventual replacement of it by a personal union. The interests of Polish, Hungarian and German liberals were common and stood in a clear contraction to the aims of the political elites of smaller nations who hoped for unhindered national development in the reformed Danubian federation.

The antipathy of the Polish liberals in Galicia towards the Ukrainians and other nations helping the “reaction” was usually being justified on humanitarian and libertarian rather than on national grounds. This declared humanitarianism, however, often did not rule out a high level of aggression (the famous opinions of Engels about “non-historic” nations from the same era come to mind). The *Gazeta Narodowa* was infuriated many times by the joy shown by the Ukrainians because of the Austrian victories in Italy; it emphasized the friendship of the Polish and German liberals, describing a celebratory dinner in honor of “our constant friend,”⁵⁴ the Austro-German liberal Franz Schuselka—a politician considered by the Czech liberals as one of the chief enemies of their national aims. When Croats, Serbs, Romanians and Slovaks stood on the side of Vienna in the fight against the Hungarian uprising, the *Gazeta* did not hide its indignation. “All the Slav tribes expect the Poles” are fighting “against freedom and the independence of all nations, which Austria by force and hypocrisy” was able to subordinate. Only the “Hungarians, Poles and German liberals” defend freedom; they must therefore “combine their attempts” as they have “one aim, the final overthrow of absolutism.” Those who sided with Austria were called the “Slavic barbarians.”⁵⁵

The *Gazeta Narodowa* stopped being issued in November 1848 when the state of siege put an end to the free political life in Galicia. The last flash of the Revolution of 1848 in Austria was the activity of the Parliament which—transferred to Kremsier in Moravia after the outbreak of the Viennese revolution in October—continued its deliberations up to the moment

when it was dispersed in February 1849. It worked out a compromise project of the Austrian constitution, aiming at the reconciliation of the aspirations of individual nationalities with the demands of the modern unitary statehood. The leader of Galician liberals, Franciszek Smolka, who gained great popularity as president of the chamber, took part in the preparation of this project. In this last period of the revolution, the Poles lost any hope for the break-up of the monarchy and now counted only on the easing of national subjugation; the dispersing of Parliament put an end to these hopes, too, and frustrated the attempt at a reform, later described by many historians as the last chance of transforming Austria into a democratic federation of equal nationalities.

The Galician liberals were concerned not only with national problems. In August 1848 the *Gazeta Narodowa* published an article entitled “*Co chcemy dla Polski?*” (What do we want for Poland?). “Poland is indivisible from the Dniestr to the Oder and from the Baltic to the Black Sea and the Carpathians. [...] All the children of this motherland, of the same mother are our blood brothers, are Poles [...] This brotherhood will not be realized in Poland until all its inhabitants receive an equal share in duties and charges, rights and benefits of its social and national life [...] We, therefore, want equality for all before the law,” and the law itself has to ensure freedom.

“The social order of the nation” is to “rest on these fundamental bases: Brotherhood, Equality and Freedom.” The principle of “popular sovereignty” is proclaimed. “The organic authorities: legislative, executive, judiciary and supervisory” belong “to everyone, poor, rich, educated or non-educated.” The “representation” of the nation is to come from elections “free, direct, independent, universal.” Parliament is to have one Chamber and it is to be “often renewed,” and the executive power should be “strong, so as to maintain public order [...] responsible for its actions before the national judiciary, periodically and often renewed, and what is more revocable.” A certain singularity was to be a “supervisory board,” supervising the executive and judicial powers (not the legislative one) and entitled to drawing “all public clerks as well as private citizens to a responsibility before the national courts for any transgression of the law.” The social system was enigmatically defined as a “brotherly association of work, talent and capital”.⁵⁶

The principle of the sovereignty of the people, the authorities’ short terms of office, universal suffrage, the superiority of Parliament over other authorities—all these were ideals deriving from the democratic tradition

rather than the liberal. In accordance with the specificity of Polish contemporary democracy it was emphasized, however, that the nobility is a patriotic stratum, contrary to the cosmopolitan aristocracy (the aristocrats “were in Targowica, and the nobility were in Bar”⁵⁷). It is also worth remembering that the editor of the *Gazeta Narodowa* was considered a radical and that many Galician politicians proclaimed more moderate views, demanding e.g. the restriction of electoral rights from the fear that the non-informed peasants will vote for government candidates.⁵⁸ (This argument influenced the attitude of the Galician liberals towards the general elections up to the end of the century.)

After the dispersal of the Austrian Diet a new constitution was imposed, drafted by Franz Stadion. It did not, however, come into force as it was brought down by the so-called New Year's Eve patent of December 31, 1851: absolutism rejected the fiction of its alleged temporary character.

In Greater Poland things were different: Prussia emerged from the revolutionary era with a constitution, and even though after 1848 the electoral rights were restricted and the executive authority was strengthened, there was no return to absolute governments. When hopes fell for a war with Russia and for a Polish–German friendship, whilst on the German side a trend appeared for the joining the Poznań region into the future united Germany (even though this province had never belonged to the former Holy Roman Empire nor to the German Union), the supporters of organic work were not left without the possibility of action. It is in the latter period of the Revolution of 1848 that one of the most interesting attempts at forming a mass social organization occurred in the Grand Duchy of Poznań.

We are concerned here with the Polish League, active in the years 1849–1850. The organization, founded in January 1849 in Kórnik (not far from Poznań), set itself the aim of defending, by legal means, the Polish “national cause” (which, as August Cieszkowski claimed *expressis verbis*, meant the striving towards the independence of Poland). National solidarity was the main principle of action, and general meetings began with Mass and a suitable sermon. As the means of action, clause 4 of the statute of the League mentioned: “freedom of associations, namely the right to establish societies for suitable purposes and for common debates over them,” “freedom of press, namely the right to announce publicly all proposals, principles and opinions through print and word in political, official and personal subjects” and also “voluntary contributions, gifts and personal service.”⁵⁹ Such a description of the methods results from the liberal conviction of the omnipotence of institutions of civil society: this attitude was

modeled on the activities of the Anti-Corn Law League in Britain, established in 1838 by the well-known liberal economist Richard Cobden.

The circulars of the Central Directory, in which the influence of Cieszkowski can be seen, form a kind of beginner's handbook of the ideology of organic work. "The strength of associations is a discovery as important for society in the current times, as the invention of steam power was for mechanics not long ago [...] And the foremost feature of these social machines is that they draw their main strength from superficially trivial [...] elements—just as a steam engine which also brings such enormous strength from mere drops of water. That is why the invention of steam engines, as well as associations, could be rightly considered as the heralding of the power emerging in our century [...] whose name is: organic democracy."

The participation in an association gives a person a chance to change his fate—and, "next to the trust in God, nothing gives a person more dignity than trust in themselves. [...] Nothing better confirms domestic and public virtues than an independence won by one's own merit." The Directors of the League recommended that the landed gentry should support the peasants' savings with donations, creating in this way a habit of thrift, which "in all peoples" is "an acquired rather than inborn virtue."

The Polish League stood before a problem common to all Polish liberals of this era: aiming at modernizing the society and the economy, one should see to it that the quick social transformation does not lead to shocks and to the sharpening of conflicts. The people must be prepared "for real liberty [...] As one cannot teach someone to walk, only by walking and to swim, only by swimming so no other way can be used to lift people and prepare them for liberty, only by liberty itself; of course liberty checked and directed by older and more experienced people able to instill confidence in their pupils."⁶⁰ Fearing revolutionary connotations, the League did not bring into its statute the formula "Liberty, Equality, Brotherhood." At the same time, however, Cieszkowski, as a member of the Directory, emphasized that the League retains these principles: it is based on liberty because it uses all political freedoms for its benefit, i.e. freedom of press, of associations, etc; the League retains equality in all internal relations of its organism, brotherhood is the main basis of the League.⁶¹

The League, gradually limited by the Prussian authorities, was forced to self-dissolution in 1851. During its rise it consisted in the whole Prussian partition of almost 40 thousand members, of which almost 30 thousand were in the Poznań region. If we remember that the number of the Polish

population in the Grand Duchy of Poznań was not a full million, and that women were excluded from membership of the League, then it is easy to see the phenomenon of this mass grouping which had no equal in the whole of the Polish history of the nineteenth century.

The British historian, Norman Davies called the revolution of 1848–1849 in Poland “The Spring of Other Nations.” It is true, it does not have such a significant meaning in the history of Poland as it does in the history of Hungary or Germany, and it is much less important than the great uprisings of 1830–1831 and 1863–1864. It did not encompass most of the land of the former Commonwealth laying under Russian rule, whilst in the Prussian and Austrian partitions its rhythm depended on the dynamics of the revolutionary activity of the metropolis, not on the internal rhythm of the changes in Polish society. This was why the Polish national movement in 1848–1849 showed a very strict connection with the freedom movements of other nations.

Throughout the whole romantic era there existed a widespread feeling that the liberty of Poland and the liberty of Europe are one and the same. This attitude reached its peak in 1848. The Revolution put to the test the conviction of the European democrats and liberals that the endeavors of individual nations towards freedom are not contradictory and are in perfect agreement with the endeavors of the liberals towards political freedom. Although the year 1848 witnessed deep, often bloody conflicts between nationalities, it is true—and often forgotten⁶²—that it was also witness to far-reaching and often successful manifestations of cooperation between them. The participation of Poles in the Hungarian revolution is an eloquent example. It is necessary to remember the Slav Congress in Prague and the Polish–Ukrainian agreement contracted there, as well as the plan for an Austrian constitution prepared by the Diet in Kremsier—this unprecedented event when the representatives of all the nations of the western part of the Monarchy managed to achieve a settlement. The attempts at mediation between the warring Hungarians and Slavs, undertaken by Czartoryski in emigration are also worth mentioning. No wonder then, that against the subsequent age of chauvinism the Revolution of 1848 appeared as a true epoch of a romantic brotherhood of peoples united in a common fight for freedom. Half a century later the novelist Bolesław Prus created an old veteran who remembers the fate of the great ideals of 1848 with melancholy. This veteran, Ignacy Rzecki, remains the most famous literary reflection of the legend of the 1848 revolution—a legend that is not completely devoid of confirmation in historical facts.

Notes

- 1 Skowronek, *Czartoryski*, 427. On the criteria for ascribing various political groupings of the Great Emigration to great currents of political thought such as liberalism, conservatism etc., see an interesting polemic between Walicki and Skowronek: Andrzej Walicki, "Marks i Engels o sprawie polskiej. Uwagi metodologiczne," in *Powstanie listopadowe, 1830–1831. Geneza, uwarunkowania, bilans, porównania*, ed. Jerzy Skowronek and Maria Żmigrodzka (Wrocław, 1983), 301–316, and Skowronek "Uwagi o metodologicznych problemach badań roli sprawy polskiej," in *Powstanie listopadowe, 1830–1831*, 317–320.
- 2 Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz, *Pamiętniki. Dziennik pobytu za granicą* [Memoirs Diary of my stay abroad], vol. I (Poznań, 1876), 266, 263, 265.
- 3 Karol Boromeusz Hoffman, *Historia reform politycznych w dawnej Polsce* [History of political reforms in the old Poland] (Warsaw, 1988) (1st ed. Leipzig, 1867), 29, 62. See also "Dzień 3 maja" [The Third of May], *Kronika Emigracji Polskiej*, 1838, 123; Marian Henryk Serejski, *Studia nad historiografią polski* (Łódź, 1953), 47ff and passim; Andrzej Wierzbicki's introduction to Hoffman's *Historia reform*, 5–26.
- 4 "Co to jest arystokracja?" [What is aristocracy?], *Kronika Emigracji Polskiej*, 1839, 81–88.
- 5 Lelewel has summarised his ideas in "Prawność narodu polskiego [1836]" [Legality of the Polish nation, 1836], reprinted in *700 lat myśli polskiej. Filozofia i myśl społeczna w latach 1831–1864* [700 years of the Polish thought. Philosophy and social thought 1831–1864], ed. Andrzej Walicki (Warsaw, 1977), 792–798. On the popularity of Lelewel's ideas cf. Sławomir Kalembka, *Prasa demokratyczna Wielkiej Emigracji* (Toruń, 1977), 106ff.
- 6 The above analysis is based on various documents reprinted in *Towarzystwo Demokratyczne Polskie. Dokumenty i pisma* [Polish Democratic Society. Documents and Writings], ed. Bronisław Baczko (Warsaw, 1954). The documents are: "Akt założenia Towarzystwa Demokratycznego Polskiego (Mały Manifest)" [Grounding Act of the Polish Democratic Society (Small Manifesto)], 3–8; "Manifest Towarzystwa Demokratycznego Polskiego (Wielki Manifest)" [The Manifesto of the Polish Democratic Society (Great Manifesto)], 85–96; "Uwagi Centralizacji przy dyskusji nad manifestem Towarzystwa" [The Remarks of the Committee on the debate on the Society's Manifesto] 117–124; "Rozbiory kwestii polityczno-socjalnych. Kwestia przedwstępna [1838]" [Analyses of the socio-political questions. The Introductory Question, 1838] 129–142; Jan Nepomucen Janowski, "Krótki katechizm polityczny [1834]" [Short political catechism, 1834], 43–44, Editorial article to the second issue of *Postęp*, 18 June 1834, 65–66.
- 7 Jan Czyński, "Do mieszkańców miast polskich" [To the Inhabitants of the Polish towns], *Echo Miast Polskich*, no. 1, 1843. The article is reprinted in *Postępowa publicystyka emigracyjna 1831–1846. Wybór źródeł* [Progressive journalism in exile 1831–1846. Selected sources] ed. W. Łukaszewicz and W. Lewandowski (Wrocław, 1961), 419. The same edited volume publishes (429–432) a very interesting article by Czyński, entitled "Co to jest demokracja" [What is Democracy], *Echo Miast Polskich*, no. 11, 1844, which contrasts the true "Polish Democracy" to a false "Noble Democracy" that allegedly rules in the Emigration. See also Handelsman, *Adam Czartoryski*, vol. I, 281, 293; and Artur Eisenbach, *Wielka Emigracja wobec kwestii żydowskiej* (Warsaw, 1976), passim.
- 8 Henryk Kamieński, *Stan średni i powstanie* [Middle estate and uprising], ed. Wanda Stummer and Stefan Kieniewicz (Warsaw, 1982), 46, 61.
- 9 "Literatura zagraniczna. 'Le Compagnon du Tour de France par George Sand'" [A review article], *Tygodnik Literacki*, no. 21, 1842, 161.
- 10 K. Libelt, "[Review of] 'Die bedingte Pressefreiheit, historisch-kritisch entwickelt u.

- beleuchtet von Theodor Heinsius,⁷ Berlin 1841,” *Tygodnik Literacki*, no. 31, 1841, 257. See also Bogdan Zakrzewski, *Tygodnik Literacki 1838–1845. Zarys monograficzny* (Warsaw, 1964).
- 11 Early usages of the term *inteligencja* are listed in Peplowski, *Słownictwo i frazeologia*, 166–167. The concept of “organic work” was analysed by Stefan Kieniewicz, “Problem pracy organicznej, 1840–1890,” in his *Historyk a świadomość narodowa* (Warsaw, 1982), 34–58; as well as by Tomasz Kizwalter and Jerzy Skowronek, in the (much more interesting) introduction to a reader entitled *Droga do niepodległości czy program defensywny? Praca organiczna—programy i motywy* [The road to independence or a defensive program? Organic work—programs and motives], ed. T. Kizwalter, J. Skowronek (Warsaw, 1988), 7–51.
 - 12 Andrzej Walicki, *Filozofia a mesjanizm* (Warsaw, 1970), 239. Walicki’s books, especially his English-language work *Philosophy and Romantic Nationalism: The Case of Poland* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994) provides an excellent presentation of the philosophy of the Polish romanticism, making clear the inner logic of this philosophy even for those readers who are far from sympathizing with it.
 - 13 “O melioracjach w rolnictwie” [On agricultural melioration], *Przewodnik Rolniczo-Przemysłowy*, no. 15, 1836, 339. On analogous attitudes in the Russian Partition see Ryszarda Czepulis, *Mysł społeczna twórców Towarzystwa Rolniczego* (Wrocław, 1964), 154–156 and Tomasz Kizwalter, *Nowatorstwo i rutyny. Społeczeństwo Królestwa Polskiego wobec procesów modernizacji, 1840–1863* (Warsaw: PWN, 1991), 17–26.
 - 14 Str., “O materializmie” [On materialism], *Przewodnik Rolniczo-Przemysłowy*, 1840, no. 17, 186; “Przemiana rolnictwa angielskiego w 18-tym wieku” [Changes in the English agriculture in the eighteenth century], *Przewodnik Rolniczo-Przemysłowy*, 1840, no. 3, 31.
 - 15 M. Oczapowski, “O pożytkach z wyścigów konnych i wystawy zwierząt domowych i wpływie ich na postęp przemysłu rolniczego” [On the profits from horse races and from the exhibition of domestic animals and on their influence on the progress of agricultural industry], *Biblioteka Warszawska*, 1841, September, 619–620.
 - 16 Henryk Kamiński, “Filozoficzne pojmowanie ekonomii politycznej, a raczej ekonomii materialnej społeczeństwa” [Philosophical understanding of the political economy, or rather of the material economy of the society] *Tygodnik Literacki*, 1842, no. 38, 301. Henryk Kamiński, *Filozofia ekonomii materialnej ludzkiego społeczeństwa* [Philosophy of material economy of the human society], (Warsaw, 1959) (1st ed. Poznań 1843–1845), 92–93, 227, 289, and passim. See also Jerzy Jedlicki, *Jakiej cywilizacji Polacy potrzebują* (Warsaw, 1988), 180–188.
 - 17 Libelt, “[Review of] ‘Du credit et de la circulation, par A. Cieszkowski,’” *Tygodnik Literacki*, no. 4, 27 January 1840, p. 25.
 - 18 H. K. [Kamiński], “Filozoficzne pojmowanie ekonomii politycznej, a raczej ekonomii materialnej społeczeństwa,” *Tygodnik Literacki*, 1842, no. 37, 291.
 - 19 Czepulis, *Mysł społeczna*, 115 and passim; Tomasz Kizwalter, “Liberale oder Konservative? Der Liberalismus des Grundadels in Polen in der ersten Haelfte des 19. Jahrhunderts,” in *Liberale Traditionen in Polen*, 47–58.
 - 20 “Systemata Kredytowe” [Credit systems], *Przewodnik Rolniczo-Przemysłowy*, 1836, no. 18, 421–422.
 - 21 Cf. Antoni Roszkowski, *Poglądy społeczne i ekonomiczne Augusta Cieszkowskiego* (Poznań, 1923).
 - 22 “Sprawozdanie z działalności Wydziału Przemysłowego Kasyna Gostyńskiego za lata 1838–1841” [Report of the activities of Industrial Department of the Gostyń Cassino for the years 1838–1841], in *Droga do niepodległości*, (see footnote 11), 107–110.
 - 23 Libelt, “[Review of] ‘Die Kunst, reich zu werden’ von M. von Prittwitz, Mannheim 1840,” *Tygodnik Literacki*, 1841, no. 1–4, 1–2, 7–10, 17–18, 25–26.

- 24 "O europejskim pauperyzmie" [On European pauperism], *Przewodnik Rolniczo-Przemysłowy*, 1840, no. 23, 262–263.
- 25 Aleksander Kurc, "O kasach oszczędności" [On saving banks], *Biblioteka Warszawska*, 1842, January, 55–57.
- 26 August Cieszkowski, *La Pairie et l'aristocratie moderne*, (Paris, 1908), 2nd ed., 5.
- 27 Kurc, *O kasach*, 57, 63.
- 28 Libelt, "O miłości ojczyzny" [On the love of Homeland], in Libelt, *Rozprawy*, (Cracow, 1869), 131, 141–142.
- 29 F. Z., "Kronika literacka. 'Mięszaniny obyczajowe' przez Jarosza Bejlę" [Literary Chronicle. Review of Jarosz Bejla's *Mięszaniny Obyczajowe*], *Biblioteka Warszawska*, 1842, February, 427–435.
- 30 K., "[Review of] 'Lehrbuch des Vernunftrechts und der Staatswissenschaften, von Carl v. Rotteck,'" *Tygodnik Literacki*, 1840, no. 16, 121–122. On Rotteck's importance for German liberalism cf. Friedrich C. Sell, *Die Tragödie des deutschen Liberalismus* (Stuttgart, 1953), 120–125.
- 31 Libelt, "[Review of] 'Die bedingte Pressefreiheit,'" *Tygodnik Literacki*, 1841, no. 31, 258.
- 32 Libelt, "O odwadze cywilnej" [On Civil Courage], in Libelt, *Rozprawy*, 49 [see footnote 29].
- 33 "O stanie chłopów w Wielkim Księstwie Poznańskim" [On the Situation of Peasantry in the Grand Duchy of Poznań], *Tygodnik Literacki*, 1841, no. 4, 28.
- 34 Libelt, "Demokracja—demagogia—arystokracja" [Democracy—demagogu—aristocracy], *Rok 1845 pod względem oświaty, przemysłu i wypadków czasowych*, no. 6, 59 and 66.
- 35 Libelt, "O rzeczywistym istnieniu myśli" [On the real existence of thoughts], *Tygodnik Literacki*, 1840, no. 22, 174.
- 36 *Przewodnik Rolniczo-Przemysłowy*, 1840, no. 4.
- 37 Libelt, "Pomysły o wychowaniu ludów" [On the education of peoples], in Libelt, *Rozprawy* (Cracow, 1869), 167.
- 38 "Ogólny charakter i ważność pism periodycznych, a zwłaszcza obyczajowych (ciąg dalszy)" [General character and importance of periodicals, especially ones concerned with morals (continuation)], *Tygodnik Literacki*, 1842, no. 39, 307–309. See also Libelt, "[Review of] Die Kunst, reich zu werden," *Tygodnik Literacki*, no. 3, January 18, 1841, 17.
- 39 Libelt, "O miłości ojczyzny" and "Uwagi nad uwagami uczynionymi o stanie średnim" [Remarks on remarks made on the middle estate], in Libelt, *Rozprawy*, 63–160 [see footnote 29]. See also Walicki, *Filozofia a mesjanizm*, 180–186, and Andrzej Zieliński, "Rozważania o narodzie i narodowości w publicystyce poznańskiej lat czterdziestych XIX w." [Reflections on nation and nationality in the journalism of the Poznań region in the 1840s], in *Idee i koncepcje narodu*, 118–119.
- 40 "O rozwijaniu się stosunków socjalnych pod wpływem przemysłu i oświaty" [On the development of social relations under the influence of industry and education], *Rok 1845 pod względem oświaty, przemysłu i wypadków krajowych*, no. 7, 25–33.
- 41 "[Review of] J. P. Jordan, 'Jahrbücher für slawische Literatur, Kunst und Wissenschaft,'" *Tygodnik Literacki*, 1842, no. 38, 297. The centralist tendencies among the emigrated democrats are analysed by Henryk Żaliński, *Kształt polityczny Polski w ideologii TDP* (Wrocław, 1976), 84–85, and Sławomir Kalemka, "Pojęcie narodu w publicystyce obozu demokratycznego Wielkiej Emigracji" [The concepts of nation in the journalism of the democratic camp of the Great Emigration], in *Idee i koncepcje narodu*, 167.
- 42 Libelt, "Literatura niemiecka. III. Wewnętrzny wizerunek ludów germańskich" [German Literature, part III. Internal situation of the Germanic peoples], *Biblioteka Warszawska*,

- February 1842, 277; Libelt, *Kurs historii literatury niemieckiej* [Outline of history of German literature], *Biblioteka Warszawska*, September 1841, 602–605.
- 43 Quoted after *Droga do niepodległości*, 123.
- 44 Lewis Namier, 1848. *The Revolution of the Intellectuals* (London, 1946), 11 and passim.
- 45 “Z Poznania, dn. 23 marca” [From Poznań, 23rd of March], *Gazeta Polska*, no. 3, 1848, 10; “Cztery tygodnie” [Four weeks], *Gazeta Polska*, no. 4, 1848, 13.
- 46 Aleksander Batowski, *Diariusz wypadków 1848 roku* [Diary of events in 1848], ed. Marian Tyrowicz (Wrocław, 1974), 89–90.
- 47 Cf. Kalemka, *Prasa demokratyczna*, 174–175.
- 48 Janina Rosnowska, “Jan Dobrzański—redaktor *Gazety Narodowej* w 1848 roku,” *Rocznik Historii Czołpismnictwa Polskiego* 1970, 319.
- 49 Batowski, *Diariusz*, 213.
- 50 Batowski, *Diariusz*, 173.
- 51 “Jedność” [Unity], *Rada Narodowa*, no. 18, 12 May 1848, 70. On Supiński’s essay cf. Jan Kozik, *Miedzy reakcją a rewolucją. Studia z dziejów ukraińskiego ruchu narodowego w Galicji w latach 1848–1849* (Cracow, 1975), 195.
- 52 Batowski’s speech of 25 April 1848, quoted in his *Diariusz*, 134–135.
- 53 Kozik, *Miedzy reakcją a rewolucją*, 58–74.
- 53 “Austria. Z Wiednia 15 sierpnia” [Austria. From Vienna 15th August], *Gazeta Narodowa*, 1848, no. 96, 454.
- 55 “Sprawy polskie. Ostatnia rewolucja wiedeńska i jej następstwa” [Polish problems. The latest Viennese revolution and its consequences], *Gazeta Narodowa*, 1848, no. 143 and 144. According to other opinions, however, “the Czechs are true democrats”—see *Protokoły posiedzeń Rady Narodowej Centralnej we Lwowie* [Reports of the proceedings of the Central National Council], ed. Stefan Kieniewicz and Franciszka Ramotowska (Warsaw, 1996), 164.
- 56 “Sprawy krajowe. Czego chcemy dla Polski” [Home affairs. What do we demand for Poland], *Gazeta Narodowa*, 1848, no. 87.
- 57 Józef Dzierzkowski, “Do braci właścicieli ziemskich” [To my brethren, the landowners], *Gazeta Narodowa*, 1848, no. 96. (The pro-Russian confederation of Targowica [1791] was considered treacherous in the Polish tradition, whereas the anti-Russian confederation of Bar [1768–72] was perceived patriotic.)
- 58 The disputes among the Polish politicians about the best way of dealing with the elections is analysed by Stefan Kieniewicz, *Pomiędzy Stadionem a Goslarem. Sprawa włościańska w Galicji w 1848 roku* (Wrocław, 1980), 77–80. See also the speech by Józef Dzierzkowski delivered to the meeting of the National Council on 5 October 1848 (*Protokoły posiedzeń Rady Narodowej*, 187 and footnote 6, 191).
- 59 *Akt pierwszego walnego zebrania Ligi Polskiej, które się odbyło w Kórniku dnia 10, 11 i 12 stycznia 1849* [Proceedings of the First General Meeting of the Polish League that took place in Kórnik, 11th and 12th January 1849], (Poznań, 1849), 32, 40.
- 60 *Akt drugiego walnego zebrania Ligi Polskiej, które się odbyło w Poznaniu dnia 12 kwietnia 1850 roku* [Proceedings of the Second General Meeting of the Polish League that took place in Poznań, 12 April 1850], (Poznań, 1850), 40, 37, 51.
- 61 *Akt pierwszego walnego zebrania*, 31.
- 62 An instance of such over-pessimistic interpretation is provided by the otherwise excellent work of Lewis Namier, according to whom only the victory of the reaction has saved the reputation of the 1848 revolutions in Central Europe (L. Namier, 1848, 123–124).

CHAPTER 4

Liberalism as the Ideology of the Intelligentsia

The Spring of the Nations was a liberal revolution: liberal aims and slogans comprised the core of the revolutionary postulates, moving aside the more radical socialist aims. The physical defeat of the revolution did not mean an ideological defeat; on the contrary, liberal ideas became increasingly more embedded in the minds of educated Europeans.

On Polish soil too, the period between about 1840 and 1885 comprises almost half a century of a clear ideological superiority of liberalism, irrespective of all political repression. Already in the forties liberalism—as a way of seeing the world rather than a political program—was becoming an increasingly more important component of contemporary notions about social life. Even its opponents were influenced by it. José Ortega y Gasset writes that in the nineteenth century every educated European, irrespective of their convictions, spontaneously accepted liberal ideology and only through a conscious act of intellectual effort could they reject it.¹ Also noteworthy is the view of the Hungarian politician and thinker Baron József Eötvös expressed a few years after the 1848 Revolution: the initial successes of the revolution in Paris, Vienna or Berlin should be explained by the attitude of the authorities rather than by the determination of the masses. Conservative governments were so convinced of the inevitability of the victory of liberal principles that they agreed to the demands of the demonstrators without resistance.²

Conservative criticism of Western civilization, its impiety, materialism and its disregard for tradition does not weaken (but grows) in Polish journalism of the forties and fifties. Usually, however, it is underlined by conviction that liberalism is victorious and that the conservatives are left only to defend that which is salvageable. The socialists too, although they believed in the historical necessity of their victory in the future, at that time had the feeling that it is liberalism that is the ideology of the era (from this

period comes the apology of the historical role of the bourgeoisie, presented by Marx and Engels in the *Communist Manifesto*).

"No congresses, no obstructions, no censorship can help against the ideas of the age. Freedom of press, telegraphs, railways and steam—these are the powers that will destroy the yoke of despotism, and have already partly done so. It is they that can make the people happy on the road of progress and true light,"³ Aleksander Batowski claimed in 1848. The spirit of social change "seems to be in the air, like cholera or a plague it has crept into the poorest and darkest corners," Tomasz Potocki, an author from the circle of nobility concentrated around Andrzej Zamoyski, wrote some ten years later and, therefore, in a much more difficult political situation. "The Russian government [...] is strong, it is ready to conquer every outburst, every mutiny, but it is not able to fight with the spirit of the times nor is it in a state to hold back the development of thought and progress. Even if [...] it stopped all relationships with neighboring countries, still it cannot stop that which is happening in them from reaching the consciousness of its own subjects [...]. Every army sent abroad to fight these principles is, in essence, infected by them and turns into an army of apostles of freedom." "Public opinion forces its imagination on everyone, whether true or false," writes Potocki, completely in the spirit of Eötvös, "the Russian Government is so strong, so independent, so self-governing [...], yet it also unintentionally shares these views."

It is a case of something more than just views. Even Russia, devoid of liberal institutions, creates substitutes for itself, writes Potocki in a book published in Poznań and therefore outside the reach of Russian censorship. The possibility of discussion "constitutes the benefit of parliamentary governments [...]. The clashing of opposing opinions replaces the dangerous experience to which society is subjected, whenever an idea of a single [...] person becomes a principle of the social order without discussion and a public debate. In countries with no parliamentary forms, only the discussion of the subject in print can fill this void. [...] I understand that when a law is proclaimed, [...] the authority should forbid its criticism; but I do not understand such censorship that forbids the printing of a manuscript only because it discusses a subject on which the government has still to issue a decision; when, on the contrary, this is a moment in which the conscientious and serious work of the matter should be necessary for the government itself."

The triumph of the principle of free trade means a rise "in the endeavors of the nations towards peace, that most indispensable condition for the

development of industry. From now on neighbors begin to be seen not necessarily as opponents but as collaborators; envies and national hatreds begin to be erased little by little; respect for justice and well understood self-interest slowly replace the former strivings towards war and conquest,” writes Potocki completely in the spirit of the English apostle of free trade, Richard Cobden.⁴

Such convictions mark the specificity of the era stretching between the end of the 1830s and the middle of the 1880s. Before this, liberalism was simply incomprehensible for the majority of the elite: we have seen how many of the enlightened dignitaries of the constitutional Polish Kingdom between 1815 and 1830 (with Staszic at the fore) identified liberal opposition with the feudal anarchy of the nobles. Later, in turn, from the end of the nineteenth century, the anti-liberal currents became more confident and convinced that liberalism had outlived itself whereas their power was constantly growing. Although after 1945 liberalism will recover part of its lost ground, it will never again (as least until today) hold such an unquestioned position as in those five decades or so in the middle of the nineteenth century. If at any time, it was then and not at the close of the twentieth century that the liberals could have had an illusion of the “end of history.”

In the political thought of the 1850s positivist ideals gained an ever-wider importance. The first traces can already be seen in the era of triumphant romanticism: in the 1830s and 1840s we encounter thinkers who can be classified both as the successors of the late enlightenment “philosophy of common sense” and as the precursors of positivism in Poland. Amongst them was Adrian Krzyżanowski, professor of the Warsaw University in the constitutional Polish Kingdom, who most likely was the first in Poland to quote the name of the French creator of positivism, Auguste Comte. More important was a professor of the Cracow University, Michał Wiszniewski, author amongst others of the philosophical work *Bacona metoda tłumaczenia natury* (Bacon’s method of explaining nature), dealing with the ideas of English empiricism. One should also mention Dominik Szulc, whose work *O źródle wiedzy tegoczesnej* (On the source of contemporary knowledge) appeared in 1851. Prepositivist elements can be perceived also in the already discussed historical thought of Karol Boromeusz Hoffman.⁵

It has already been said that the philosophical thought of romanticism was able to adapt fairly well to the task of justification of liberal political philosophy. Positivist philosophy, however, was better suited for this aim

and from the mid-nineteenth century it has already been—in different variants—the main theoretical foundation of political, social or economic liberalism.

In the face of the expansion of liberal ideas it is not correct to describe the situation after the fall of the revolution as a “reaction”: in reality, neither Austria nor Prussia returned to the former system of government. In Prussia the constitution was retained and the franchising of the peasants was finalized, whereas in Austria the “neo-absolutist” *regime* undertook the construction of a centralized modern capitalist state, although without any concession for democratic or liberal ideas. At the same time both of these states suppressed all political opposition: in Galicia the liberal press ceased to appear in the latter part of 1848, and in the Poznań region the *Gazeta Polska* did not outlast the Polish League and went out of circulation in 1850. For one more year the liberal organ was the *Goniec Polski* (Polish Messenger), later, however, the liberals from Prussian Poland would become devoid of their own periodical up to the end of the decade.

Only in the Russian partition did the first half of the 1850s truly bring a “reaction”; under the increased censorship the *Biblioteka Warszawska* (Warsaw Library) ceased discussing social problems and its output fell to three hundred copies. The banker Leopold Kronenberg saved the magazine, which was about to go bankrupt. In 1850 the governor of the Kingdom, Prince Ivan Paskevitch, forbade the nobles’ assemblies in Klemensów. Changes came in the middle of the 1850s: the death of Nicholas I and the defeat of Russia in the Crimea coincided with the death of Paskevitch. After 1856 the Russian partition witnessed a political revival, which in the latter part of the fifties spread also to the other partitions. The possibility of travel abroad increased—and not for the first time in the history of Polish thought “from comparisons with foreign, free and well organized countries there flowed bitter criticism of the local authorities and of the whole political and social system of Poland.”⁶ The culmination of a huge wave of patriotic manifestations, inaugurated in the autumn of 1860, was the great demonstration on the thirtieth anniversary of one of the battles of the 1831 uprising, the Battle of Grochów (February 24, 1861). The external indications of this patriotic exaltation were only partly suppressed after the imposition of martial law by the Russian authorities (October 14, 1861).

Political currents in the Kingdom can be roughly divided into three: the radical-insurgent camp of the Reds, the camp of the Whites set on organic work, and the followers of Marquis Aleksander Wielopolski, aiming towards the restoration of the autonomy of the Polish Kingdom united with Russia.

It would be simplest to say that the Reds were democrats, the Whites liberals, whereas the followers of Wielopolski were conservatives. It is not so simple, however, because the currents, crystallizing from the chaos of various small groups in the beginning of the sixties, were not homogenous, and especially the camp of the Whites embraced various, often contradictory elements.

The Russian amnesty linked with the ascension of Alexander II restored freedom for many of the Siberian exiles deported in the 1830s and 1840s for participation in conspiracies. The so-called Siberians became an important element in the intellectual revival of the Kingdom. The centers of intellectual life were the student and graduate circles of the three Warsaw schools of higher education: the School of Fine Arts, the Agricultural Institute in Marymont near Warsaw and the Medical and Surgical Institute opened in 1857. At the end of the 1850s secret student circles were formed; radical irredentist catchwords, preached in French exile by the veteran of the 1848 insurrection, Ludwik Mierosławski, became increasingly popular.

“To raise the national character everywhere, in literature, in art and in manners, and even in the dress, dances and play. To go among the less educated classes, to their parties and walks, to encourage morality, hard work and the respect for national traditions; to instill respect and confidence for the academic uniform and for the educated classes. To support [...] the activities of the Agricultural Society. In the important social questions, to spread the principles of peasant emancipation, the transformation of the Jews into citizens, the freedom of conscience and religion, to try to liberate the craftsmanship from the shackles of monopoly, to encourage the establishing of scientific, industrial and brotherly help societies, to flog before the public opinion all abuses of bad officials [...]. During the holidays to travel around the country, study its customs and spread political propaganda amongst the people.”⁷ This characteristics of the aims of the student circles in the turn of the 1850s and the 1860s (written by Karol Majewski) may have consciously toned down the elements of patriotic radicalism, as it is part of the evidence given in the inquiry after the fall of the uprising. Nevertheless, it is an interesting record of the nation-building program of the Warsaw intelligentsia.

This intelligentsia wanted to model themselves on the Poznań “organic work” movement; its plans to establish a Warsaw equivalent of the Poznań Society of Scientific Help came to nothing due to the official prohibition. While publicly proclaiming (in émigré publications) the idea of Polish in-

dependence, the intelligentsia with equal strength opposed the radicals aiming towards an uprising. "We feel that the moment of resurrection has not yet come, that Poland would arise today only as an undead [...]; so we should, with the strong hand of the cemetery caretaker, restrain this inconsiderate act," Karol Ruprecht, one of the former Siberians and leaders of the liberal intelligentsia, wrote in an emigration pamphlet. One of the key representatives of this group called the "milleners" by their political opponents (from the French *mille*—a "thousand," as though they were postponing the independence of Poland for another thousand years) was Edward Jurgens, a clerk of the Committee of Internal Affairs, a graduate of Dorpat University and a descendant of a Plock town family of German origin.⁸

In spite of the activities and significance of the circles of the intelligentsia, the basis of the political power of the Whites was formed by the gentry—the followers of Andrzej Zamoyski, grouped around the *Roczniki Gospodarstwa Krajowego*, and after 1857 in the Agricultural Society. They had not changed their views since the 1840s and most of them still considered tenancy rather than endowing the peasantry with land as the best solution to the social question. In the early 1860s they did not hide that their short-term aim was self-government, whereas in the long-term it was the independence of Poland in the boundaries of 1772, possibly in a union with Russia. Not excluding the possibility of an uprising in favorable circumstances, they lay their main hopes in international politics, above all in the France of Napoleon III.

Andrzej Zamoyski himself could not avoid taking part in politics; he always stressed that his ideal was the English aristocracy, not isolated from society, but sharing its problems and aspirations. Facing the strong pressure of patriotic opinion, Zamoyski wanted to avoid the charge of treason by all means; this reduced his possibilities of action in repeating slogans (the famous *allez-vous en* in answer to the question posed by a Russian dignitary: what can Russia do in order to calm the situation in Poland). The Whites (similar to the Reds in this case) did not allow the possibility of Poland resigning from its former eastern lands. This position made any agreement with Russia impossible. Zamoyski, belonging to one of the foremost Polish aristocratic families, always had in mind the anti-patriotic attitude of the Polish aristocrats collaborating with Russia in the late eighteenth century (one of them, Szczęśny Potocki, was even among his ancestors). He understood that for the Polish aristocracy the only way to retain its social prominence was to prove the sincerity of their patriotic position. As one of the eminent Polish historians put it, the memory of the eight-

eenth century “traitors” has “blocked the way for Andrzej Zamoyski to reconciliation with the Czar.”⁹

Leopold Kronenberg, a rich banker and industrialist occupied a special place among the Whites. Liberalism in Poland was never (in spite of the slogans) the ideology of the bourgeoisie: this great capitalist, engaged in liberal politics, is an exception. From 1859 Kronenberg was the owner of the *Gazeta Codzienna* (Everyday Newspaper), and Józef Ignacy Kraszewski became its chief editor. The one-time opponent of Western civilization, alarmed by its cold, soulless and mechanic character, Kraszewski now believed it possible to accept Western institutions without destroying confidence and mutual bonds that allegedly linked the social classes in pre-capitalist Polish society. Without abdicating from moral evaluation of economic life, Kraszewski came to the conclusion that “today well-being is undeniably a supporter of morality. [...] Poverty disinherits human nature from nobleness.” This does not mean that he praised luxury—“since poverty exists alongside luxury, then luxury cannot be justified neither from the Christian, nor from the economical point of view.” He therefore wrote: “Defend us God from thick materialism and the transformation of the country into one great workshop and stock exchange! We only need our daily bread for the body and love for the heart. When the wealth of the country is raised, minds will be enlightened; the ancient virtues of an agricultural nation will light up again, orderly hospitality and temperate happiness will return—God will be with us!”¹⁰ In these words very clearly—more clearly than among the majority of followers of capitalist development—resounds the old patriarchal tradition of the gentry manor. Kraszewski hoped that the process of industrialization and modernization would not prove deadly for this ideal.

In current political matters the views of Kraszewski (presented by him in the émigré brochures) were not far from the ideas of Karol Ruprecht: the radicals should be restrained and uprisings should not be allowed, but instead, inner forces of society should be organized.¹¹

For all the currents within the movement of the Whites, a matter of principal importance—not tactically, but ideologically—was the permanent solution “of social questions in the spirit of national needs.”¹² Similarly to the organic work activists of the 1840s and to the Polish positivists of a later period, the liberals of the early 1860s aimed to transform the estate society into a civil society and to unite the separate estates into one nation—although, evidently, they did not themselves write in these categories, they spoke rather of the patriotic duty towards people. They rejected insur-

gent activity not only because it did not have any chance of success, but above all because it would reverse the natural process: we must, as Kraszewski wrote, “from a handful become a nation,” before we begin a battle for independence. “The inhabitants of the towns, the middle class, of which we have only the germ, the richer nobility and the petty nobility—this is the total of our strength. Only in the Duchy of Poznań do we have the people behind us here and there [...] If the people are not ours, then Poland will not be ours.”¹³

Andrzej Zamoyski continued to advocate tenancy on the English model. Increasingly popular, however, even in his own environment, were calls for enfranchisement. It was demanded not only by authors from the intelligentsia (Ruprecht, Kraszewski), but also by some of the representatives of the gentry (Tomasz Potocki, Jakub Gieysztor). It was to be executed without involving the government, from the initiative of the gentry, allowing the peasants to buy out their obligations—Karol Ruprecht reminded that the Napoleonic Code had foreseen such a possibility allowing the conversion of obligations into cash, and the subsequent repayment of hereditary rent by the tenant on his demand.¹⁴

In the eyes of the liberals such a solution would have numerous advantages. It would increase the number of small landowners, who could become the germ of the much longed-for “middle class.” Enfranchisement by way of voluntary contracts would strengthen the peasants’ respect for private property. The peasants would gradually revise their hostility towards the nobility and slowly become conscious members of the nation. It is worth noting that the repayment of the peasants’ obligations would last even a dozen years or so, and throughout this time the factual situation would not differ much from tenancy. The difference between the solutions was therefore smaller than it would seem at first sight.

The liberal intelligentsia saw the Jewish question in a similar perspective to the peasant one: Jewish emancipation was expected to create new patriots for the nation and change a stratum considered as harmful and isolated into a useful group integrated into society. It is necessary “to raise the peasant and the Jew to the dignity of a free person and citizen” because “the peasant and Jewish questions are the source of the rebirth of Poland,”¹⁵ wrote Ruprecht. The Agricultural Society was more conservative and in 1861 was opposed to a quick introduction of equal rights, expressing the opinion frequently heard in conservative circles that before this happens, the Jewish population must come closer to the rest of the society.¹⁶

The attitude towards non-Polish nationalities of the borderlands of the former Commonwealth was conditioned by similar endeavors to social integration. Lithuanians and Ruthenians would be allowed to preserve their own local separateness, the new Commonwealth could be a trialistic federation (not a dualistic one as formerly), but one thing was certain: “our motherland,” we read in the address of the nobility to the Emperor Alexander II in August 1862, “is the whole of Poland in the borders which God marked out and which history has delivered,”¹⁷ and so in the borders of 1772. The principle of historic rights and not national right to self-determination was the basis for claims for independence in the eyes of Polish patriots—not only liberals. It was the same for all national movements in Europe. Kraszewski wrote: “We do not deny our Ruthenian brothers either faith, or language, or custom or rights equal to ours, or even autonomy [...]. Through a union with Poland, Ruthenia enters the family of European nations [...]. We cannot understand why two nationalities, even ones intermingled one with the other, cannot live in agreement with each other, without quarrels and fights. Switzerland is also composed of a population of different origin and language, Belgium has Flanders and the Walloons of the south and east, France has Normandy, Brittany, Alsace and Lorraine, not counting the southern provinces. Poland joined with Lithuania and Ruthenia by love, tradition and interest, should comprise an inseparable whole.”¹⁸ The verbal friendliness is accompanied by references to state systems that are completely different from one another, from federal Switzerland to centralized France. From similar emphatic statements it is therefore difficult to conclude much about the situation of non-Polish nationalities in the future Commonwealth, except that the Commonwealth would not lead a policy of brutal Polonization.

Although both gentry and intelligentsia within the White camp preached similar programs, the ideological split between them was easy to notice. In the 1850s the intelligentsia becomes more and more conscious of its own separate position and begins to compete with the nobility for the leadership in society. Liberal gentry and intelligentsia, although equally convinced about the political immaturity of the masses, differ in their views about the future leadership of the nation. Appealing to the gentry for voluntary enfranchisement of peasants (in exchange for compensation), Karol Ruprecht uses arguments that are very similar to those of a nobleman from Lithuania, Jakub Gieysztor. The latter, however, links his own arguments with the defense of the historical and contemporary role of nobility, as well as with a critical look at Western civilization where people “are beginning to treat

the land as a commodity and traffic it as gypsies do horses,”¹⁹ and so the liberal defense of franchisement occurs in the surroundings of conservative phraseology. Józef Ignacy Kraszewski stood on the border between both trends, linking—as has been said—hopes for modernization with the hope of the rebirth of traditional values. The trends were not in conflict with each other and in significant ideological controversies occupied the same position. Nevertheless it is possible to discern an early phase of the process that will appear in the post-uprising era when the intelligentsia becomes the main spokesman of liberal thought, and the nobility—including the former Whites from the beginning of the 60s—assumes a conservative position.

The camp of the Reds—for a historian of liberalism less essential than the Whites—was not homogenous either. Close to the intelligentsia branch of the Whites in social matters, the Reds differed from them in their determination for a quick uprising. Many of them, under the influence of the radical rhetoric of Mierosławski, rejected the very idea of organic work as distracting the attention from the fight for liberty. For the Reds, remaining under the influence of romantic democratic radicalism, the nation was an existing reality, not, as for the liberals, a program for the future, an ideal that still had to be created from a society divided into “castes”—estates. That is why the Reds rejected the whole introductory program of organic work as a tool of nation-building—it was dispensable since, according to them, a coherent and homogenous nation already existed and was only waiting for the sign for an uprising.

Barbara Petrozolin-Skowrońska emphasizes that a moderate Red such as Agaton Giller and a radical White such as Karol Ruprecht, both former Siberians, had more in common with each other than with the opposing wings of their own camps. The same author even writes about an “intellectual camp of democratic liberal Polish irredentism divided between the Whites and Reds,” which blocked the Whites from a liaison with the government, and the Reds from a quick uprising, “it therefore blocked two routes: towards settlement and towards revolution.”²⁰ To this camp undoubtedly belonged Jurgens, as well as Karol Majewski who rose from the radical student youth and attempted to mediate between the Whites and the Reds.

Finally, Marquis Aleksander Wielopolski was an independent factor in his own right. In 1861 he held the position of Director of the revived Government Commission of Religious Beliefs and Public Enlightenment, and in June 1862, after a temporary disgrace in St. Petersburg, he stood at the fore of the civil administration of the Kingdom. From 1846 when he pub-

lished the “Open letter of a Polish nobleman to Prince Metternich,” condemning Austria for provoking the Galician slaughter and anticipating the turn of Polish politics towards Russia, his sympathies for a Polish–Russian settlement were well-known. In spite of the anti-western accents visible in the letter, in St. Petersburg he sought support amongst the liberal occidentals and the advocates of the reforms.²¹ Wielopolski’s notes from his youth, published by Adam Skalkowski, do not allow any doubt about the conservative viewpoint of their author at that time—we find in them threads so typical for Polish conservative thought, as the necessity of the adaptation of the legal system to the “spirit of the nation,” the idea that the Napoleonic Code is alien to Polish tradition and a conviction about the harmful superiority of the “economical trend” in Polish thought.²²

However, on the eve of the January uprising, Wielopolski clearly stood out from most conservatives, inclined to emphasize the “coldness” and materialism of modern civilization. From his inspiration the journalist Józef Miniszewski wrote “that authority [...] exists only in the interest of social good; any government which does not intend this good or does not know how to resolve it, loses its power, loses its foundations. And, in turn, society without the vigilant and watchful care of the authorities for public good is condemned to [...] sterile immobility. Peoples and governments united into political bodies can have only one civilizing interest [...] and therefore they must [...] support each other unceasingly.”²³ The conviction about the independent and constructive role of the government and the state authority is reminiscent of the ideas of enlightened absolutism, and maybe also the theories of Thomas Hobbes. In a never-presented fragment of speech to the clerks of the Governing Committee of Internal Affairs, Wielopolski outlined the possibility of a pro-reformist dictatorship, based on townspeople and the Jewish population, against the patriotic and quite as much socially conservative nobility. His opposition against the political aspirations of the Catholic clergy is the next indication of a kinship with the “enlightened-absolutist” way of thinking. To put an end to patriotic-religious manifestations, he considered the use of administrative measures, “as happens in other Catholic countries, namely in France”—he referred therefore to a country with a very strong tradition of subordination of the Church to the State.²⁴

Wielopolski aimed very consistently at the abolishment of the still existing elements of estate society and the integration of the estates into a modern nation of citizens equal before the law. The granting of civil rights to the Jews (planned by Wielopolski and introduced by the decree of the Czar

in June 1862) was to serve this aim. This reform meant the fulfillment (with certain limitations) of one of the classical postulates of European liberalism.

Equally important was the education reform which was meant to establish an extended system of schools of all levels including the elementary school in every village (the law anticipated a source of finance for the schools, so that they did not exist only on paper). The system was to be permeable, namely the attendance at every type of school should make possible to go on to higher education. The result of the reforms was the opening of the Warsaw High School—a renewed Polish university—in the autumn, 1862. While not giving up the establishment, if necessary, of separate schools for the German and Jewish population, the school reform set as its final aim a homogenous school, the same for all strata and ethnic groups of the Kingdom. In acquiring the Polish language and culture, Jews and Germans were to strengthen the weak middle class. In this way Wielopolski wanted to solve a problem that had been haunting the liberals for decades: that of forming a middle stratum in Poland. He aimed also to introduce a school duty above all in order to strengthen the integrating influence of the school; under Russian pressure, however, he had to back out of this plan.²⁵

The reforms of Wielopolski included also the restoration of municipal autonomies and the announcement of transforming serfdom into tenancy (which meant the realization of a concept close to that of Andrzej Zamoyski). In spite of his moderation in the peasant problem, as regards education and Jewish question Wielopolski was a better liberal than most of the Whites. The school reform was close to the ideals of the liberal intelligentsia, no wonder then that it united Wielopolski with many representatives of this group, as for example the well-known medics Wiktor Szokalski, Tytus Chalubiński and Ignacy Baranowski or a lawyer from St. Petersburg, Włodzimierz Spasowicz.

In this way in the early 1860s elements of liberalism were present in all the great ideological camps of the Polish Kingdom. It is probably the only time in the history of Poland, when almost all the participants of the political debates could subscribe to one or another version of liberal thought.

The rebirth of political life in the Kingdom was accompanied by an analogous process in Prussian and Austrian Poland. It will be easier to discuss Galicia in the next chapter as the 1863 uprising does not form an essential turning point there. At this point it is worth discussing the

changes in the Prussian partition. After the downfall of the Polish League the only interesting indication of ideological life was the biweekly *Przyroda i Przemysł* (Nature and Industry), which came out in the years 1856–1858 propagating positivist philosophy and relating to the tradition of Enlightenment. One of the editors was Adam Wiślicki who after the January uprising would play an important role in the development of Warsaw positivism as editor of the *Przegląd Tygodniowy* (Weekly Review).²⁶ In 1858 a change on the Prussian throne (after the deposition of Frederick William IV because of illness, the state was ruled by the Prince Regent, the future King William I) brought—as so often in such situations—a certain degree of liberalization. From January 1, 1859 liberals, previously concentrated around the *Gazeta Polska*, began to publish the *Dziennik Poznański* (Poznań Daily). The publisher was Hipolit Cegielski and Władysław Bentkowski, a delegate to the Prussian Diet, was one of his main co-workers.

The newspaper “is to be the organ of Polish nationality in the legal limits guaranteed by the Treaty of Vienna, as well as within the limits and on the basis of the freedom resulting from the universal constitution of the country,” we read in the opening article of the first issue. Such a declaration is typical of contemporary liberalism, especially in Central and Eastern Europe: the liberals consider themselves the natural guardians of the national idea and the statement that the magazine is the “organ of Polish nationality,” in principle suffices for contemporaries to understand that they are dealing with a liberal magazine.

On the further pages of the same issue the editors attempt a more precise description of their ideals. “Being ourselves Catholics, belonging to a nation in which the Catholic faith [...] forms part of its nationality, we will be neither able nor willing to deny ourselves a lively sympathy for the cause of this Church. Our journalistic task, however, is not ecclesiastical, but political. Looking from the political point of view at the social make-up, mutual relations, rights and duties of the citizens of one country, we acknowledge the principle of freedom in the most general [...] meaning of the words as the main condition of the organic and favorable development of the nation,” and because of this “we should also support religious freedom in the political system.”

True to the principles of 1848, the publishers of the *Dziennik* still believe in the possibility of a peaceful co-existence of Poles and Germans: an example of this is Dr. Metzsig from Leszno, “a German born in the Poznań Duchy who considers this land his motherland [...] and who often spoke in German to the world [...] in the defense of the justice and righteousness of

the Polish cause.”²⁷ Justice towards the Poles lies in the interest of the government itself; “an essential feature of righteousness and justice is that they are equally beneficial to seemingly contradictory interests, to authorities that govern and to the population that is governed [...] In Enlightenment and in freedom, just as in justice and righteousness, no one loses, everyone benefits.”²⁸

“We will stand by the principles of religious and political freedom, equal rights of all social classes and of organic progress.” The editors consciously use “a new expression: equal rights, in the place of the former commonplace: equality,” in order to stress that they mean equality before the law, with full respect to the “difference of merit, fortune, influence, position,” which results from human nature. “We would like every member of the nation to attempt to attain one of these superiorities, if God has given him the necessary powers and attributes; we would like him not to be hampered in this competition by laws that are issued in the interests of one selfish class or caste of society [...]; we would like the long standing custom born out of privilege and often stronger than the written law not to stand in the way.” Here we have a clear differentiation between the liberal principle of equal chances and equality before the law, on the one hand, and the equality of property proclaimed by “some recent social theories,” on the other hand.²⁹ Working out this clear differentiation saved the liberals from the problem that often troubled them in the first half of the nineteenth century whenever they tried to define accurately their position towards the principles of the French revolution. Now at last they knew what sort of equality they support.

Ideals of freedom and of nation still, in the spirit of the Spring of the Nations, merged into one for the editors of the *Dziennik*, which described itself as an eager advocate “of liberalism, that is, the idea of the freedom and unification of Italy.”³⁰ The enthusiasm for Garibaldi and other Italian heroes did not exclude Catholic orthodoxy, but rejected “unconditional lay allegiance to the ruler of Rome [i.e. the Pope] and the politics of Rome.” Such allegiance is “unnecessary for religion, and deadly for national identity.”³¹

The ideas of the Poznań liberals are close to the concepts of the Whites of the Kingdom, a shift of emphasis is, however, visible. Enfranchisement in the Poznań region had been carried out for some time; the nation-forming process was more advanced, and the institutions that made possible the “organic progress” were at least partly formed. The constitutional system allowed political activity—and in effect the Poznań liberals could put

a less pressure on the national program and a greater one on the ideas of political liberalism.

Nowhere was the ideological triumph of nineteenth-century liberalism so clear as in economic thought. For all liberals, between the 1820s and the 1860s, the most important science, whose authority was conclusive in every debate, was that of economics. The issue was only to spread the knowledge of it throughout society—and this was progressing rapidly.

“A new order of things begins to work, *novus rerum nascitur ordo*,”³² Ludwik Wołowski noted in the *Gazeta Codzienna* (Everyday Newspaper) on the occasion of the lowering of custom duties by Napoleon III. “Public opinion in the end awoke from its sleep” and understood the necessity for the development not only of agriculture, but also of trade and industry—rejoiced Piotr Falkenhagen-Zaleski.³³ Even the opponents of liberalism with sadness admitted that the new science triumphs; they burdened it therefore with guilt for all unhappiness linked with modernization.

At the same time, however, the advocates of liberal economics themselves more and more often believed that a certain adaptation of the theory should be made in order to solve specific Polish problems. A certain influence of the intellectual atmosphere of romanticism, always more interested in local specificities than in universal issues, is easy to discern here. Local traditions of economic thought also played their part. The conviction that the situation of a backward country needs the activity of the state, marked the way of thinking of the enlightened adherents of “police science”; the program of a way out of from backwardness was considered by Surowiecki; many of the economic practitioners, amongst them Prince Drucki-Lubecki, were convinced—throughout the nineteenth century—of the harmfulness of *laissez-faire*-ism. It seems, however, that it was not until the abandonment of Enlightenment universalism that it was possible to work out a theoretical concept of national economics.

The general principles of political economy are already established, an anonymous author wrote in 1849 (Cieszkowski or someone under his influence), now, however, “economists [...] must study in detail the needs of the nation to which they belong [...] and adapt general truths to its needs.”³⁴ This national economics was therefore not meant to oppose classical economics, but only to make it more specific. The author of the cited article understood it to be an applied science, showing the German customs union (*Zollverein*) as an example of the German spirit in economics.

The influence of German economic thought is obvious: in the 1840s Friedrich List challenged the universalism of classical economics with his

“national economics system,” and the main works of Wilhelm Roscher, considered the creator of the historical school in economics, were written in the 1850s. Drawing from the cameralistic tradition, Roscher emphasized the necessity of taking into account the specificity of a given country and its history in setting the economic laws; in reality, however, the laws he came to did not differ much from the regulations of classical economics.³⁵ In this way the cited Ludwik Wolowski, a Polish economist living in France, could—in a column of the *Gazeta Codzienna* in 1860—link admiration for Roscher with admiration for economic liberalism, connected, however, with a certain moderate educational protectionism (i.e. protectionism foreseen as being temporary, until the protected branch of the economy reaches maturity).

Discussions as to whether a liberal economy is advisable for Poland or whether a certain form of economic protection would do better, form an important element of the talks held in the famous Bohemian resort of Karlsbad by the heroes of Tomasz Potocki's book. One of them, the Councillor, an advocate of franchising peasants and of a moderate modernization under government control, believes that only “a country saturated with capital and in which all branches of industry have been previously highly developed” can accept the principle of free trade. Poor countries cannot, however, have such politics: “would not a clear result be that in the countries which were until now impoverished and with little industry no workshops will be established in the future [...]? And in countries in which until now the whole success was based on a system of protection, will not the existing companies immediately fall as a result of its annulment, [...] not being able to hold out against the rivalry of foreign production? Will not capital tied up in these companies be lost together with them? Although products from foreign lands [...] may be cheaper than those which the poor country had previously made at home, still as a result [...] of internal setbacks of production there will be nothing with which to buy them, since there will not be the products with which to pay the exchange. And so the downfall of the industry existing today, the tottering of credit [...], in short, general poverty, [...] the practical result of a principle theoretically so logical.”³⁶

This serious argumentation, retained in a spirit not far from the deliberations of Surowiecki from half a century before, does not convince the author. His *porte-parole*, Krzyżtopór, expresses ideas derived from the spirit of gentry liberalism: freedom of trade “gives rise to improvements in the material existence of the population,” whereas the “system of protection-

ism and prohibition” causes “that in the country develops an inappropriate, abnormal production, which remains in such relationship to true production as hothouse vegetation is to vegetation under the bare sky.” By protectionism “we tear away part of the labor and capital from the true, natural production of our country.”³⁷

When it comes to “poor countries,” in order to make them richer, it is necessary to “awaken in them not an artificial [...] but a natural production. Their maximum production can be maintained only in this way, and so the maximum of articles, whose amount in excess of national needs, will pay for the value of those lacking and brought from abroad.” This argumentation leaves no doubt that Potocki carefully read the classics of English economics, and was especially influenced by the theory of economic development contained in the *Wealth of Nations* by Adam Smith, as well as by the theory of international exchange worked out by David Ricardo. The literary battle between the Councilor and Krzyżtopór is reminiscent of the difference between Wawrzyniec Surowiecki and Fryderyk Skarbek from the first quarter of the century. However, there appears a new element.

The freedom of trade and the flow of capital are not enough. Let us imagine two states with similar geographical conditions, one rich, and the other poor bordering with each other. “Why does capital that is accumulated in one of the states, remaining at a low percentage, not go to the neighboring country where it could gain far greater profits? It is unfailingly because in the first state personal freedom and personal property are safe, because the profit from industrial undertakings, although admittedly less high because of the competition is nevertheless assured; while on the other hand, in the neighboring country, freedom is hampered by difficulties and lawlessness imposed by the authority, property is subjected to annexation and confiscation and all this in spite of a high rate of interest, and at the same time high promised benefits, completely frighten away the neighboring capital. However, if in this country the internal order becomes stabilized, [...] if the rule of law is established, if an atmosphere of freedom pervades, then soon we shall see the foreign capital pressing from outside into the country in order to develop there the most profitable, namely the natural branches of industry, and in a short time the state up till now poor, will light up with success and will be covered with abundant production.”³⁸ The conclusion is simple: the state, not interfering directly in the economy, still has a lot to do in order to create the conditions for its development.

Among the co-workers of Andrzej Zamoyski, Potocki belonged to the most consistent liberals. It is true that he wrote, “true conservatism does

not rely on muffling the spirit of the times, since this is impossible, but instead on directing it.”³⁹ If, however, this quotation testifies that Potocki considered himself a conservative then it can only be concluded that he himself is an indication of the process analyzed by him, namely the spread of liberal ideas which hovered in “the air” and crept into all the political directions. It is true that it is easy to find in him views that sound clearly conservative, such as the fear of the excessive social mobility of the peasants. It would not be difficult for a Marxist to uncover a “class meaning” of typically noble reluctance towards the protectionist economy. However, Potocki builds even conservative views on concrete matters into the liberal system of thought, a system that featured rational reasoning, the pushing aside of religious factors and also a conviction of the possibilities of the research and discovery of social laws. Potocki praises the capitalists and believes that in order to protect the property, the state must defend the creditors—here the ideology of liberal capitalism has priority over the interests of the gentry (let us remember the different attitude of Niemojowski during the debates about moratorium in 1818).

It was not Tomasz Potocki, however, who formed the national economic system called for by an anonymous inhabitant of Greater Poland in the cited article of 1849. This role fell to Józef Supiński. Born in 1804, a graduate of the University of Warsaw (his Master’s thesis, which was dedicated to the problems of taxation, was graded “pass” by Fryderyk Skarbek⁴⁰) lived as an émigré in France from 1831–1844, working as a manager in various factories and making himself familiar with French and English classics of economics. In 1844 he moved to Lwów where he lived for the rest of his life. At the time of the 1848 Revolution he collaborated with the Lwów *Dziennik Narodowy* and after its downfall dedicated himself to research. His main books were *Mysł ogólna fizjologii powszechnej* (General Thought of Universal Physiology, 1855) and *Szkoła polska gospodarstwa społecznego* (Polish School of Social Economy, 1862–1865). He did not finish this last work because of the loss of sight; we have therefore only the first volume in two parts.⁴¹ He died only in 1893 but from the beginning of the 1870s he stopped any scientific activity.

Supiński is a programmatic empiricist, he rejects not only the whole romantic tradition but also the tradition of rationalism not linked with empiricism, namely that which sometimes is called “intellectualism.” In his opinion two general trends could be differentiated in European thought; thinking about things, that is to say inferring from experience, and thinking about thinking, namely deliberations about the concepts formed by the

human mind. Only this first trend makes any sense, while the second is completely valueless and leads human thoughts into the wilderness of metaphysics.

Supiński is also a methodological individualist: "If in the place of individuals [...] we put a collective sum of all persons, that is a nation, everything that is the truth there in a smaller size, will remain also the truth here. What is true in relations between one individual and another, it must be also true in relations between people and people, because the relations between nations are truly only as relations between people; nations taken collectively can only devour each other."⁴²

As probably the first of the eminent Polish liberal thinkers, he clearly declared his agnosticism, at least in the methodological sense: "What will happen in the dark, cold and confusion when the sun ends its life, we do not know [...] honest science and a true mind do not go beyond the limits which it reached: it does not contradict that which it does not understand, it does not claim something that it cannot prove."⁴³ Programmatic empiricism does not exclude unconscious apriori claims. The nineteenth-century positivism (not only in Poland) not less than romanticism was subject to the temptation of forming great historiosophical constructions. The only difference was that the positivists believed that their constructions were justified by experience and by reason. A model for such constructions was given in France by Auguste Comte. *A General Thought* gives a good example of his reception. In this sense we can speak of a certain similarity of Supiński's concept to the great metaphysical syntheses of the first half of the century, in spite of completely different philosophical assumptions.⁴⁴

Of essential importance for Polish liberal thought is the next work of Supiński: *Szkola polska gospodarstwa społecznego* (The Polish School of Social Economy). It was to encompass two volumes, of which the first (in two parts) is entitled *Mechanizm społeczny* (Social Mechanism), whereas the second, never written, was to bear the title *Organizm społeczny* (Social Organism). The first volume deals with the laws of economic and social life that are binding irrespective of individual will, whereas the second was to deal with the possibilities of individuals and governments to influence economic life. From scattered references in the first volume (especially in its last chapter, which was to form a bridge with the second volume) as well as from the later work *Listy treści społecznej* (Letters on Social Matters) we can roughly reconstruct the views of Supiński on social and economic politics, too.

Supiński differentiates two principal powers acting in nature—the power

of projection and the power of decay. The first is a uniting and uniforming power, the second is an individualizing and crumbling one and life—biological as well as social—can last because of the balance between them. However, the main concept of his economic theory is the social resource. “Every thought realized in practice carries the germ of further, sometimes completely different ideas; every finished and used up work merges with a later work and—transformed—it regenerates; [...] the knowledge and work accumulated during many centuries [...] is a social resource, it is the element on which the human world develops, just as organic life develops in the elements of the universal world [...] Therefore, the social resource is a collection of social values; it is the accumulation of useful works, it is the reserve of worked out usefulness no matter whether it was lodged in dead substances or became the strength of thoughts.”⁴⁵ Supiński therefore applies the physical law of the conservation of matter to social life: the resource lasts “similarly to the eternal duration of physical elements, flowing there from one being to another, from mind to mind and from an object to an object.”⁴⁶ Supiński sometimes used the concept of resource as “capital,” in the wider sense of the word (such as when we speak for example of human or intellectual capital etc.), sometimes he had something even deeper on his mind. He is concerned with all the achievements of the whole of humanity in all the fields, existing objectively and independently from the knowledge of the people living at a given moment (is there not a certain analogy with Popper’s World 3?).

The concept of social resource is linked with the vision of humanity as a union of generations; it accentuates the slow accumulation of experience. At the same time, however, it is a very individualistic concept, emphasizing the role of petty activities in the creation of resource; it perfectly fits the justification of a program of organic work.

Economic truths—writes Supiński—“are unshaken but non-insistent,” so, unlike the laws of physics they can be disregarded without any immediate consequences, and such an attitude will have its revenge only in the further perspective. The interesting concepts of social resource and non-insistent truths were unfortunately not used for the needs of analysis, although the endeavor to persuade his fellow countrymen of the necessity of adapting to these non-insistent economic truths comprises a significant ideological message of the works of Supiński. The categories of economic thinking are accepted from the classical school, above all by the medium of the French economists.

Supiński is opposed to all forms of protectionism, either through custom

duties or in form of direct involvement of states in economic activity. He was especially against the concepts of such economists as Jean Simonde de Sismondi, according to whom a crisis of capitalism will be followed by the impoverishment of the masses and, consequently, by the overproduction caused by the lack of means for purchasing produced goods.

Supiński stands against such a reasoning: Poland after all is a country of poor social resource, “winding roads, humped-back and muddy, whose first and accidental existence is due to the first coarse carts; stinking and dripping taverns, low and dark, without chimneys, floors or locks, dirty and torn clothing; beastliness, drunkenness, fights, robbery.”⁴⁷ In such a country a warning against overproduction looks like a poor joke. Supiński opposes the national poverty with the image of a rich country, happy, educated, clean and orderly—“this is the supposed overproduction. God let our grandchildren reach that unhappiness.”⁴⁸

A principal disagreement with the protectionist ideas does not mean that the spontaneous actions of individuals would by themselves bring economic development. Individuals do not understand their own long-term interest. In a certain sense Supiński is only apparently hostile to the system of protectionism. He is convinced that the economic situation of a backward country demands from those participating in economic life a different behavior than in a developed country. If in spite of this he does not demand the help of the state, this is because he seems to believe that people undertaking economic decisions will themselves understand—under the influence of his books!—the laws of economy and will agree to comply with these non-insistent laws in their lives.

So, in spite of the declared reluctance to state intervention in economic life, Supiński implicitly accepts the principal aim of interventionism: although an inducement to a behavior profitable in the long run, is unprofitable in a given moment from an individual point of view. In his later work *Listy treści społecznej* he already allows protectionism until national industry grows in strength.

A vision of an economic system that would be suitable for Poland is based on the conviction that the attempts at sudden industrialization will not bring good results. In a poor country great investments will detain the capital that was difficult to acquire and could be used for production on a smaller scale. If foreign capital wants to build railways, then please do so—but the poor local capital should not be squandered in this way. Development must occur slowly, by promoting light industry and traditional rural industry—Supiński dedicates a long digression to the wooden locks pro-

duced with unequalled skill by the inhabitants of the Świątniki village close to Cracow.

In the old debate between the advocates of the production of luxury goods as a motor for economic development and those favoring the production of modest objects of everyday use, Supiński occupies a middle position. He emphasizes the indispensability of creating in society, especially amongst the peasant masses, a new scale of needs and a wish to improve their fate. However, this endeavor should be kept within certain limits since the consumption of luxury goods does not favor savings and the accumulation of capital. Also, basing the economic growth on luxury goods is impossible because local luxury products are of lower quality than those from abroad.⁴⁹ The ideal in the sphere of consumption is therefore welfare without luxury—in the sphere of production “not great, but dense handcraft workshops”⁵⁰ producing objects of everyday use.

The modernization of agriculture, also hindered by the lack of capital, is as important as industry and handicraft. The farmer stands before three paths: he can increase the expenditure in order to raise the quantity and quality of the yield, through which the rise in income will be higher than the rise in costs; he can, due to diligence and knowledge, “raise the quantity or quality of the yield not enlarging the hitherto existing expenditure; or he can, maintaining his hitherto state of production, achieve the diminishing of the hitherto existing expenditures.”⁵¹ The first of these paths is suitable for rich countries; in poor countries, however, the two remaining should be followed. More radical than the landed gentry in the Polish Kingdom, Supiński is an advocate of franchisement with the compensation payable from public funds, considering unjust both franchisement without compensation and franchising with compensation payable by the peasants themselves.

Economic matters are constantly interlaced with deliberations of a social nature. It can be seen how Supiński argues with himself, he sets down statements, of which he himself is probably not certain because on another occasion he returns to the same problem in order to throw light on them from a slightly different angle and comes to similar but not identical conclusions. Patriotic anxiety about the fate of the Polish identity on the one hand, conviction about the indispensability of a link with Western civilization on the other: pessimism (probably true to his mental attitude), compelling to predict a defeat of the Poles in “a universal contest” on the one hand, but optimism on the other, comprising an organic part of the liberal *Weltanschauung* and singling out mutual benefits for all the participants of

the process of modernization. Each of these views was already expressed in Poland, but none of the Polish liberals presented their mutual tension with such dramatism, as did Supiński in his quest for a road of economic and social development.

"An honest exchange" is profitable for both sides, he writes in one of his optimistic moods. "At whose cost does the general internal progress of England, Holland, Belgium, France, Switzerland, Italy, Germany and America take place? Is it at the cost of backward states? [...] Surely not; the source of this phenomenon can be described in a few phrases: Thrift and hard work, further the international distribution of work [...] and the internal division of work, leading to perfection, speed and cheapness; general and special education [...] and soon after all this internal trade, that once again mixes everything that was isolated by the above mentioned phenomena—this is the great mystery of the progress and might of nations.⁵² In another place, however, he writes about England that "with treacherous treaties it sucks up Spain, Portugal, Turkey" as well as the colonies; "systematically wipes out Indians, the Scottish and the Irish" and "is truly a monster existing in spite of the laws of nature."⁵³ Methodological individualism pushes him to an analogy between private and public debt, and what follows, to the concept of "nation-debtor" and "nation-creditor." As the private creditor seizes the property of his debtors, so the "nation-creditor is covered by the property of the nation-debtor which gradually loses its identity. "So Poland vanished in Eastern Prussia and in the region of Chelmino in Pomerania, as it vanishes today in the Poznań region; so it is vanishing everywhere, where strict savings and untiring work [...] will not strengthen the departing national life."⁵⁴

He optimistically writes that the result of the spreading of the exchange is "the unambiguous trend" (with these words he describes the development), "the result of the unambiguous trend is universal abundance, education, morality, might; I repeat, of an unambiguous trend, not a race, not competition, which are only the result of the defects of human history and human laws."⁵⁵ On the other hand, he acknowledged "the natural races of organic beings" as one of the principle truths of the life of nature and societies.⁵⁶

The difference between both points of view appears even more sharply in the matters concerning the existence of the Polish nation. Supiński, an occidentalist, believes in the fundamental unity of social and economic laws for the whole world: Slav countries should watch the achievements of Western countries and "hurry in their footsteps."⁵⁷ The conservation of

backwardness in the name of the protection of Polishness must not be allowed. "We place the main importance to the form and appearance, not to the thing itself" and in effect "nationality will become a ceremonial rite; the bluff folk dialect, the native language; and savagery and ignorance, the precious heritage of our ancestors."⁵⁸ Education is the main leverage of development—"dense schools make for empty prisons," and "education is universal baptism washing away original sin, original ignorance."⁵⁹

At the same time, however, Supiński attaches a fundamental significance, not less than the most enthusiastic romantics, to the preservation of Polish national tradition. This tradition plays a significant role "in nations which have lost their political life." Such nations, more than others, should beware of "change, transformation and revolution"; "in nations inclined towards a downfall [...] the last defence and the only strength is the spirit of peace, the spirit of conservation pushing away all change [...] The inclination towards all that is foreign, says Rzewuski, by destroying family customs leads to the inevitable downfall of the nation."⁶⁰ These quotes, together with the summoning of the archconservative Henryk Rzewuski, author of *Pamiętki Soplicy* (The Soplica Memoirs) and the main enemy of all modernizing tendencies, testify to Supiński's indecision. Supiński was never sure how to reconcile the Westernization with the not less urgent necessity of the protection of Polish cultural specificity.

The problem of the possible discordance of the laws of progress with the principle of nationality was very close to the second dilemma: namely that "beside nationality stands freedom"—which of them is more important? "Freedom is mainly the right and attribute of individuals, that is why freedom in our understanding does not have a plural. [...] Nationality, on the other hand, cannot exist individually and belong to individual persons [...]; therefore freedom can exist and does exist without any nationality—and the proof of this is America"; nationality, though, cannot exist without freedom, because "awakened in all strata of the nation it creates freedom for all."

Supiński investigates a problem which no one in Polish liberal thought had undertaken before him, no wonder then that he does not find unambiguous answers: "We say that freedom and nationality go hand in hand; nevertheless in a stormy social atmosphere, their mathematical balance cannot be established." Freedom can endanger nationality while nationality is not dangerous to freedom. "Nationality can survive for centuries under the pressure of barbarism," whereas "freedom not drawn from national life breaks up national cohesion because, whilst making individuals

happy on one plane, it slowly puts to sleep their collective, national feelings.”⁶¹ Supiński attempts to reconcile these contradictions in the framework of his concept of social development. It is not enough that this development should occur in an evolutionary way, it must be based on native resources, as though repeating in Poland the successive stages of the development of the West. These stages cannot be stepped over by importing western institutions, to which the country must still mature. Agriculture and industry must grow in equal measure, and large-scale industry will develop only when the country becomes richer in capital.

Organic development will lead therefore from traditional to modern agriculture and craftsmanship, and in the further plan to the development of factories. Looking from this perspective, the praise of Polish tradition sounds already much less conservative because these traditions are only the point of departure of development: specific, independent, but repeating the principal stages of the development of the West.

Organic development suits the vision of social structure, in which the main role is played by small and middle property: above all land property. Towns in Poland are weak and will be weak in the near future, and the role of the middle class will be played by petty nobility and richer peasants. Supiński hopes that these two strata will become closer to each other, will intermingle and will form a new middle estate; because “where the historical trend did not populate the towns [...] there the middle estate must form in the countryside.”⁶² In this way the praises of the countryside do not have to indicate conservative inclinations; capitalism, which will develop in Poland, will be based on modern intensive agriculture. Referring to the opinion of the American economist William Carey, he sets as an example for Poland the agricultural and yet modern Denmark. Naturally, the cooperative movement would have to form an essential element of this organic economic system envisaged by Supiński. In the dissertation entitled *Spółki i stowarzyszenia* (Companies and Associations) Supiński praises the advantages of all types of cooperatives, as his predecessors did in the 1840s. To enterprises having savings and mutual help as their aim he adds a new type: workers’ and capitalists’ companies admitting the worker to a part of the profits. This last type of enterprise can, in the long run, help to change the structure of property.

Supiński believed that the democratization of society is more important than the democratization of the political system. This statement is essential, taking into account that it was expressed in conditions of relative political freedom in Galicia; this leads us to believe that a similar view of the

Warsaw positivists, expressed in the 1870s and 80s, was not conditioned by limitations imposed by censorship, but reflected their true ideas. Convinced of the priority of social democracy over political democracy, Supiński was not an enemy of the latter. In the tradition of liberal thought he linked democratism with elitism, considering that the society does not know how to govern, but it is totally capable of choosing those who govern and to judge them ("the people know how to choose governors, but they do not know how to govern"⁶³). He was not afraid that political democracy will cause a downfall of the hitherto elite; he believed rather (in accordance with the contemporary Galician situation, but in the long term erroneously) that "the people [...] are able to perceive who has the intellect [...] and seek representatives from amongst persons who stand higher than themselves."⁶⁴

Supiński was also interested in the political aspect of national question. These reflections, to which he returned several times, always start with a problem that continued to torment him, that is, how to retain nationality without giving up political freedom and economic development. "In the name of nationality, freedom can be taken away from the nation for a long time, but only for a certain time"—whereas "in the name of freedom, national feeling can be disarranged for ever, allegiance to institutions can be awakened and the love to the motherland can be cooled down." Attention should be paid to the different role played by state institutions in the idea of the motherland, as developed by Supiński and Libelt: the latter emphasizes their significance as an important component of this idea. It can be assumed, however, that Libelt is not thinking of institutions that actually exist, but of future ideal institutions in an independent Poland, whereas Supiński takes into account institutions that actually exist on the Polish territories and rejects them as foreign.

The feeling of discrepancies between state institutions and the idea of a motherland is naturally a feature of nations devoid of states that are considered their own. Supiński was aware that the development of national consciousness in these nations takes place differently than in the old nations of the West. He was therefore in a dispute with the French liberal politician and historian Adolphe Thiers, according to whom nationality cannot be the basis of a state. Thiers was a spokesman of an idea that is to this day fundamental for French political imagination: the nation (French or any other) is created around state institutions and not on the basis of an ethnic community. Supiński negates this: Thiers and some other thinkers proclaim "that nationality is the most erroneous basis for peace and pros-

perity. [...] They would soon change their outlook [...] if their sons had to have their education in English, if their rural youth had to stand in military rows and listen to army orders which they did not understand, becoming accustomed only to the sound of the voice like a horse in the circus or a dog jumping through a hoop; if the government of their country was filled by Englishmen using their own language.”⁶⁵ The nation and the state are “two different beings,” organized on different principles, because the nation is a social phenomenon, the state is a political one. “Nations are a natural creation [...], whereas states sometimes temporarily appear after successful wars and forced treaties.” Typical of contemporary political thought of East-Central Europe is the opposing of a “necessary,” “natural” nation and an “accidental,” “artificial” state. This leads Supiński to the conclusion that: “The merging of the state with the nation is the ideal, to which the contemporary world aims.”⁶⁶

It is difficult to say to what degree this was Supiński’s original view and to what degree it was taken from literature. Supiński did not write a dissertation about the national question and his *en passant* remarks on this subject may not be carefully thought out. With all certainty, as all his contemporaries, he differentiated historic and non-historic nations, and admitted the ability to form a state only to the former (he was against a separate Ukrainian nationhood). However, the formula is thought-provoking and already heralds the idea of modern, radical nationalism.

Such a position influences Supiński’s attitude towards the problem of foreign immigration to Poland. Forty years earlier no one would have understood it: the government of the constitutional Polish Kingdom did its best to attract German weavers, craftsmen or capitalists to the country, seeing in this a chance for economic development. In this regard the government went in the tracks not only of the enlightened monarchs of the eighteenth century, but acted in the spirit of the centuries’ old tradition, dating at least from the times of medieval German colonization. Around the middle of the nineteenth century this tradition began to break down.

In this matter, as in so many other moments, we see the dual outlook of Supiński. He perceives enormous benefits from the influx of foreign settlers enlarging with their work the national resource. There is, however, a condition: the settlers will be “the multiplication of national strength” only when “national laws, more cautious than those with which the Poles bestowed newcomers who took over the towns as their own, will not allow a dangerous separation, and respecting property and personal freedom will be able to lead a foreign population on a road, on which the latter, not

realizing its inclination, will have to merge into the life of the nation on whose land they have settled.” At this point the footnote explains that “attempts of foreign settlers to remain a nation within a nation, and even dispossessing the locals of everything” is a feature especially “of a German character.”⁶⁷

Analogous fears are the trait of Supiński’s attitude to the Jewish question. In the spirit of the most superficial stereotypes he contrasts the former Polish tolerance with the ungratefulness of the Jews who in the Prussian partition described themselves as Germans, and already in pre-partitional Poland “committed numerous and revolting treacheries and abuses by money-lending, fraud, and even by the circumcision of Christians.” Supiński accuses the Jews and the Germans of obstructing the development of the towns in Poland, which resulted in the lack of the Polish middle estate, which was “one of the main reasons for our later failures,”⁶⁸ that is to say, a delay of economic development.

These statements are interesting because they came from the pen of a person far from chauvinism and nationalist exclusivity. In Supiński, maybe better than in the other Polish liberal thinkers, we can observe a tension (already noticed in the first chapter) between the two faces of liberal theory. On the one hand, liberalism is the doctrine of the freedom of the individual, freedom of thought and the multilateral economic and spiritual development. At the same time, however, it is a doctrine of modern sovereign authority, which rules over a homogenous society; it does not recognize estates, privileges, regionalisms, it knows only the citizens of the state.

In the 1830s and 40s in Central and Eastern Europe these two faces of the doctrine caused the liberals to support the processes of national awakening in a higher degree than any other grouping. The nation-building activities were for them a greater necessity than for any of the conservatives or socialists. Firstly, the unity of the nation breaks the exclusivity of the estates and democratizes the social structure, secondly the propagation of the national consciousness liberates grass-root activity, therefore, it is a fundamental—maybe the most important—factor of the development of civil society. The liberals saw other societies transform themselves into modern nations, they could therefore be afraid that if they fail to include Jews, colonists or Ruthenes into the organism of their own nation, these groups will be accepted by rivals, and the social structure of their own nation will become incomplete, and moreover, its position in relation to other nations will become weaker. The engagement of the liberals in the process of nation-building resulted therefore from the very essence of their doctrine. It

is only towards the end of the century that the growing aggressiveness of the radical nationalists will force the liberals to rethink their relationship to the national idea.

It is a great pity that Supiński did not present more widely his views about administrative centralization. In scattered references he declares himself a decided enemy of centralization, which has to be seen in the context of the situation in Austria, where the controversy between the supporters of centralism and federalism grew in strength at the turn of the 1850s and 1860s. Representatives of all the nationalities except Germans and Magyars supported decentralization; Supiński does the same, without going too far in that direction. As an example worth following he mentions France considered as a model of rigorous centralization in nineteenth-century Europe. For Supiński France links the “centralization of the government with social decentralization,”⁶⁹ namely the strong government does not stifle the initiative of the citizen. Many liberals of those times aimed to such an ideal.

An apparently conservative conviction, that in Poland there should be no place for political parties, should be seen in the context of endeavors towards modernization. This reluctance stems in Supiński from the fear that parties which take shape according to class divisions delay the integration of the society and the creation of a modern nation. This is the echo of the views of Kołłątaj from the times of the Duchy of Warsaw.

Supiński's relationship to religion plays an essential role in his theories. This is mainly because the Church is the only place, apart from school, where the people can acquire the principles of scientific economics. We have already seen this phenomenon in the Duchy of Warsaw: liberal modernizers hoped that the clergy would help them in spreading new ideas, and he could in no way understand why such an arrangement does not suit the Church. Supiński, as many liberals, was deaf to the metaphysical functions of religion. He was not an anticlerical, he was merely surprised why the Church does not limit itself to the spreading of ethics, with special regard to the moral rules which are indispensable for the functioning of a capitalist economy: thrift, the respect for private property and self-assurance. On this last matter he writes quite sincerely: the greatest obstacle for economic development in rural areas is fatalism which does not allow the peasants to aim towards any melioration in their farming. If—here Supiński has doubts—this fatalism is contrary to the Catholic doctrine, then the priests should fight against it; if, however, it is an element of Catholicism, then hard luck—one cannot count on the priests, and it is the school

that must attempt to curb it.⁷⁰ Under the guise of the lives of the saints the peasants can be taught history, under the guise of descriptions of pilgrimages—geography.

Such an attitude rather than open hostility is the basis of the conflict between Polish liberals and the Catholic Church. The liberals in good faith presented the Church an offer of cooperation, which the Church could not accept even if it had been far more open to new ideological trends than this was really the case; this would mean reducing its role to the tool of legitimizing the development of a capitalist society. The Church not only rejected the offer, but also acknowledged its standing (rather unjustly) as a masked symptom of tendencies to destroy the Catholic faith. The liberals, in turn, perceived the rejection of the offer to take part in the changes as a basic hostility—so the prejudices on both sides continued and deepened.

Pessimism is—as far as one can judge—a trait of Supiński's personality. Sometimes one can hear a bitter nagging in his declarations; especially pessimistic are the naturalist descriptions of senile infirmity used to illustrate the actions of the strength of decay, and maintained in a baroque poetics of a *dance macabre* (as such they surely comprise a rare and interesting phenomenon in Polish literature of that time). The effect—which may be unintentional—is such that Supiński seems unusually mature in relation to his contemporaries, as though he were writing a generation later, when liberalism no longer had the certainty of a historical victory. It is hard to believe that the work of Supiński, which is riddled with doubt, comes from the same time as the presumptuous preaching of Ludwik Wolowski from the *Gazeta Codzienna*. The amalgamation of the inborn pessimism with the dominant optimism of the contemporary liberal thought brought an unusually interesting effect in the form of a double perspective of looking at various social phenomena.

Perhaps Supiński does not deserve—though it is difficult to pass judgement—to be considered *the* most eminent thinker of Polish liberalism of the time of the partitions. A generation later Stanisław Szczepanowski would surpass him with brilliance of economic observations, and his sociological schemes today seem pale in comparison with, for example, the more chaotic, but more interesting observations of Bolesław Prus scattered in his journalism and novels. When it comes, however, to the the range of undertaken problems, Supiński has no equal in Polish nineteenth-century liberal literature. As the only one in Poland on this scale, he took on the task of the reconstruction of the western liberal idea and adapting it to the needs of a backward country and, according to his abilities, carried out this task.

Already ten years later his works will serve as the theoretical basis for the program of the Warsaw positivists.

In the consciousness of the researchers, Polish liberalism between the 1848 Revolution and the uprising of 1863 often remains overshadowed by the triumphant era of Polish positivism in the 1870s. It does not deserve this: already before the uprising many concepts and ideals were shaped that were developed later in the 1860s and 70s. An independent or even a deciding position was gained by the intelligentsia as the champion of liberal ideals. Consciousness of a separate group status and elements of their own hierarchy of values are visible among members of the intelligentsia already before the 1831 uprising, now, however, the feeling of separatedness deepens and begins to take on certain features of antagonism towards the still dominant gentry.⁷¹

In the liberalism of the 1850s and early 1860s there are only a few traces of romantic philosophy, still generally accepted in the 1840s—the victory of positivism in Polish culture was close at hand, the 1863 uprising merely slowed it down.

Notes

- 1 José Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses* [Anonymous translation] (New York–London: W. W. Norton, 1957), 103–104. (Chapter 11: The Self-Satisfied Age).
- 2 Joseph Eötvös, *Der Einfluss der Herrschenden Ideen des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts auf den Staat* (Leipzig, 1854), vol. I, 7.
- 3 Batowski, *Diariusz*, 106–107.
- 4 [Tomasz Potocki], Krzyżtopór [pseud.], *Poranki karlsbadzkie* [Mornings in Karlsbad] (Poznań, 1858), 25, 29, 11, 70.
- 5 Barbara Skarga, *Narodziny pozytywizmu polskiego, 1831–1864* (Warsaw, 1964), 35–76.
- 6 *Zeznania śledcze o powstaniu styczniowym* [Police Investigations after the January uprising], ed. S. Kieniewicz (Wrocław, 1956), 183.
- 7 *Zeznania*, 198.
- 8 [K. Ruprecht], *Kwestia socjalna wobec narodowej sprawy. Głos z kraju* [The Social Question and the National Problem] (Paris, 1862), 60. Cf. Kieniewicz, *Dramat*, 94–116. Various *milieux* of the Warsaw intelligentsia before 1863 are analyzed by Barbara Petrolin-Skowrońska, “Inteligencja Warszawy przed powstaniem styczniowym,” in *Inteligencja polska XIX i XX wieku*, ed. Ryszarda Czepulis-Rastenis (Warsaw, 1985) vol. IV, 71ff.
- 9 Henryk Wereszycki, “Spór o powstanie styczniowe,” in Wereszycki, *Niewygasła przeszłość. Refleksje i polemiki* (Cracow, 1987), 75. On A. Zamoyski’s position see also Stefan Kieniewicz, *Miedzy ugoda a rewolucją. Andrzej Zamoyski w latach 1861–1862* (Warsaw, 1962), 118, 242 and *passim*.
- 10 Quotations are taken from leading articles in *Gazeta Codzienna* 1860, no. 31 and 148.
- 11 Józef Ignacy Kraszewski, *Sprawa polska w roku 1861. List z kraju* [The Polish question

- in 1863. A letter from the homeland], (Paris, 1862), 2nd ed. See also Wyncenty Danek, *Publicystyka Józefa Ignacego Kraszewskiego w latach 1859–1872* (Wrocław, 1957), *passim*.
- 12 [Ruprecht], *Kwestia socjalna*, 51.
 - 13 Kraszewski, *Sprawa polska*, 43–44.
 - 14 [Ruprecht], *Kwestia socjalna*, 16 (invoking §530 and §1142 of the *Code Napoléon*). See also the speech by Andrzej Zamoyski to the Agricultural Society, published in *Gazeta Codzienna* 1860, no. 33, 1–2.
 - 15 [Karol Ruprecht] Stanisław Kazimierz Gromada [pseud.], *Zadania obecnej chwili* [The task of the present moment] (Paris, 1862), 50, 57.
 - 16 Artur Eisenbach, *Emancypacja Żydów*, 476; Eisenbach, *Kwestia równouprawnienia Żydów w Królestwie Polskim* (Warsaw, 1972), 346–347, 390–401.
 - 17 Quoted after: [Ruprecht], *Zadania*, 48.
 - 18 Kraszewski, *Sprawa polska*, 56–57.
 - 19 [Jakub Gieysztor] Kazimierz herbu Strzała [pseud.], *Głos szlachcica do swych współbraci o wolności i równości kmiecy* [Words of a nobleman to his comrades on the liberty and equality of the peasants] (Poznań, 1859), 92.
 - 20 Barbara Petrozolin-Skowrońska, *Przed tą nocą* (Warsaw, 1988), 292.
 - 21 Wielopolski's political ideas between 1846 and 1848 are analysed by Marcin Król, *Konserwatyści a niepodległość*, 84–92.
 - 22 Adam Skalkowski, *Aleksander Wielopolski w świetle archiwów rodzinnych* (Poznań, 1947), vol. I, 197–201.
 - 23 [Józef Miniszewski], *Ruch polski z 1861 roku. Rzut oka na rozwój polityczny i społeczny w Królestwie Polskim od roku 1831 do naszych czasów* [The Polish movement of 1861. A view on the political and social development in the Polish Kingdom from 1831 to our times] (Leipzig, 1862), 11. According to Skalkowski, the “big fragments” of this pamphlet have been dictated to Miniszewski by Wielopolski; see Skalkowski, *Aleksander Wielopolski*, vol. III, 144.
 - 24 Skalkowski, *Aleksander Wielopolski*, vol. III, 358, 55.
 - 25 Karol Poznański, *Reforma szkolna w Królestwie Polskim w 1862 roku* (Wrocław, 1968), *passim*. Cf. also ideas expressed by Wielopolski in a letter to his wife, dated February 23 (March 7) 1862, quoted in Skalkowski, *Aleksander Wielopolski*, vol. III, 113.
 - 26 Cf. Jan Data, *Tendencje pozytywistyczne w czasopiśmiennictwie wielkopolskim 1848–1870* (Warsaw, 1975), 80–84.
 - 27 *Dziennik Poznański*, 1859, no. 15.
 - 28 *Dziennik Poznański*, 1859, no. 16.
 - 29 *Dziennik Poznański*, 1859, no. 20.
 - 30 *Dziennik Poznański*, 1862, no. 4.
 - 31 *Dziennik Poznański*, 1860, no. 61. The two last quotes are from Stanisław Karwowski, “Historia Dziennika Poznańskiego od roku 1859,” in *Książka jubileuszowa Dziennika Poznańskiego* (Poznań, 1909), 14.
 - 32 Ludwik Wołowski, “Przegląd nauk społecznych” [Review of the social sciences], *Gazeta Codzienna*, 1860, no. 31.
 - 33 Piotr Falkenhagen-Zaleski, *O spółkach handlowych i przemysłowych* [On trading and industrial companies], *Roczniki Gospodarstwa Krajowego*, January 1861, 144.
 - 34 “Pierwszy dodatek do *Gazety Polskiej* No 11” [First supplement to *Gazeta Polska*, no. 11], *Gazeta Polska*, 16 January 1849.
 - 35 List's political and economical ideas together with their impact on nationalist ideologies are discussed in depth by Roman Szporluk, *Communism and Nationalism. Karl Marx versus Friedrich List* (Oxford–New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), *passim*.

- 36 [T. Potocki], *Poranki karlsbadzkie*, 71–72 [see also footnote 4].
- 37 *Poranki karlsbadzkie*, 66–67.
- 38 *Poranki karlsbadzkie*, 73.
- 39 *Poranki karlsbadzkie*, 29.
- 40 M. Orlowski, *Poglądy ekonomiczne Józefa Supińskiego* (Warsaw, 1938), 10.
- 41 These books were published together as Józef Supiński, *Pisma* [Works], 2nd ed., Warszawa 1883, vol. I–IV. The titles of the individual volumes are as follows: Vol. I. *Mysł ogólna filozofii wszechświata* (with a slight change in the title), vol. II–III. *Szkola polska gospodarstwa społecznego*, vol. IV. *Listy treści społecznej* [Letters on social issues].
- 42 Supiński, *Pisma*, vol. IV, 68.
- 43 Supiński, *Pisma*, vol. I, 81.
- 44 Tadeusz Kowalik, *Historia ekonomii w Polsce* (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1992), 27.
- 45 Supiński, *Pisma*, vol. II, 118.
- 46 Supiński, *Pisma*, vol. II, 108.
- 47 Supiński, *Pisma*, vol. II, 127–128.
- 48 Supiński, *Pisma*, vol. II, 143.
- 49 A contrary opinion criticizing the idea of organic development and stressing the importance of luxury goods for economic development, was expressed by an anonymous author signed as E. S. in an essay “W. Roscher i jego pogląd na stosunki rolnicze” [W. Roscher and his opinions on agricultural problems], *Roczniki Gospodarstwa Krajowego*, January 1862, 16–40. This text, however, seems to be the expression of gentry conservatism rather than that of pro-industrialist ideology.
- 50 Supiński, *Pisma*, vol. II, 263.
- 51 Supiński, *Pisma*, vol. III, 84.
- 52 Supiński, *Pisma*, vol. II, 299.
- 53 Supiński, *Pisma*, vol. III, 287–288.
- 54 Supiński, *Pisma*, vol. II, 155.
- 55 Supiński, *Pisma*, vol. II, 315.
- 56 Supiński, *Pisma*, vol. I, 145.
- 57 Supiński, *Pisma*, vol. II, 36.
- 58 Supiński, *Pisma*, vol. I, 128.
- 59 Supiński, *Pisma*, vol. III, 204–205.
- 60 Supiński, *Pisma*, vol. I, 338–339.
- 61 Supiński, *Pisma*, vol. I, 339–340.
- 62 Supiński, *Pisma*, vol. III, 223.
- 63 Supiński, *Pisma*, vol. I, 117.
- 64 Supiński, *Pisma*, vol. I, 310.
- 65 Supiński, *Pisma*, vol. I, 340.
- 66 Supiński, *Pisma*, vol. III, 276–277.
- 67 Supiński, *Pisma*, vol. II, 343–344.
- 68 Supiński, *Pisma*, vol. I, 320.
- 69 Supiński, *Pisma*, vol. III, 273–274.
- 70 Supiński, *Pisma*, vol. IV, 16.
- 71 Cf. Ryszarda Czepulis-Rastenis, *Ludzie nauki i talentu* (Warsaw, 1988), 76–86 and 231–283 (Chapters entitled “Korespondenci Joachima Lelewela (1809–1830)” [The correspondents of Joachim Lelewel, 1809–1830] and “Wzór osobowy inteligenta polskiego w świetle wspomnień pośmiertnych (1841–1862)” [The ideal of a Polish intellectual according to the obituaries, 1841–1862]).

CHAPTER 5

The Rise of Positivism

The collapse of the January uprising was accompanied in the Russian Partition by a wave of repression on a scale hitherto unknown on Polish soil. For the first time one of the partitioners undertook an attempt at the full unification of Polish lands with the metropolis. This attempt nearly succeeded on the eastern lands of the former Commonwealth considered by the Russian authorities an integral part of Russia; also in the Polish Kingdom all the elements of separate legal status were slowly dissolved. The government aimed at gradual Russification of the Polish population of, as the authorities now called it, "Vistula Land."

In the first years after the defeat, the center of Polish ideological and political controversies moved to Galicia, where in spite of the state of siege in 1864–1865, Polish political life, reborn at the end of the 1850s, retained continuity. The *Dziennik Literacki* (Literary Daily), published in Lwów by Karol Szajnocha, had at that time the greatest importance for Polish liberal thought. It was in this periodical that in 1864 a programmatic essay appeared; it was the first attempt at summing up the experience of the defeat and posing a new plan of action: *Polacy i Indianie* (Poles and Indians) by Ludwik Powidaj.¹

Powidaj refers to the saying of Frederick the Great who compared the Poles to Iroquois. He develops this thread, presenting a gloomy perspective for the nation which cannot equal its opponents armed in the whole output of European civilization, and which therefore slowly loses its identity, to melt into the stronger neighboring nations.

In order to prevent this, writes Powidaj, a basic change of attitudes is needed. "An idealistic direction" in the upbringing of the young generations must be replaced by "a real direction." The disdain with which industry and trade is surrounded must be stopped, and Poland, hitherto benefiting from cultural achievements of other nations, must itself become a co-

builder of civilization. "Let us not fear the excessive materializing of Polish society," he writes. "I would be bold enough almost to say here: let us try above all to increase national wealth, and everything else will be given to us." The nobility must initiate the change of attitudes: the children of the nobles directed towards learning industry and trade will take the odium from these fields and will convince the representatives of the lower strata that the endeavor towards social rise does not need to mean the acceptance of an unproductive life style. Due to backwardness, the economy in Poland is more important than the politics: "Wealth will be followed by education, and education—by national consciousness and a strong political position."

The main thought is not new: already in the 1840s the ruthless international competition was written about, and the motive of a disappearing nation being replaced by a stronger one often returns in the writings of Supiński. Before the January uprising this motive was toned down by other, more optimistic ones, referring to the belief in the lack of conflict of interests, now, however, it gained a new strength. Powidaj's article showed precisely the views and moods of the post-uprising generation; it was fiercely discussed and it can be regarded as an introduction to the journalist debates of the era of positivism.

In Galicia in the 1860s the problem of organic work gave way—as though against the recommendations of Powidaj—to the current politics, whose field opened with the beginning of political reconstruction of the Habsburg monarchy in 1859. The democrats were still, as in 1848, led by Stanisław Smolka and Florian Ziemiałkowski, but soon new faces started to appear—first of all a future leader of Galician liberal democrats, Tadeusz Romanowicz (born in 1843, so almost a contemporary of the Warsaw positivists). The most widely read liberal-democratic periodicals were still the *Gazeta Narodowa* of Jan Dobrzański and the aforementioned *Dziennik Literacki* of Karol Szajnocha; the latter, however, did not last through the 1860s. In 1869–1874 there came out in Cracow the liberal daily *Kraj* (Country) edited (from October 1869) by the later eminent sociologist Ludwik Gumplowicz. After its fall many liberals found a place in the Lwów weekly with the long name *Tydzień Literacki, Artystyczny, Naukowy i Społeczny* (The Literary, Artistic, Scientific and Social Weekly). The editor was Józef Rogosz, the magazine came out between 1874–1881.

The argument between the adherents of Smolka and Ziemiałkowski dominated the internal politics of the liberal groups in Galicia in the 1860s and in the beginning of the 1870s. The former wanted to join the Czechs in an endeavor to transform Austria into a federal state, whereas the later

considered it wiser to benefit from all, even small government concessions within the framework of the existing system. The advocates of Smolka, concentrated from 1868 in the National Democratic Society, received from their opponents the name “bombastic ranters” (*tromtadraci*), whereas they themselves gave the advocates of Ziemiałkowski the name “mamelukes” alluding to their supposedly servile attitude towards the leader of the party.² In 1868 the Galician Diet passed the blueprint resolution demanding separate status for Galicia but resigning from the federalization of the state as a whole which had been postulated by Smolka. The separate status was not achieved but Galicia gained a far-reaching autonomy, including the almost full Polonization of the language of all institutions.

The political debate ran simultaneously with an ideological controversy concerning the problem of organic work and the relation to romantic tradition and to positivist ideas. Here the division ran across the two political groupings and had to a great measure a generational character. To the main advocates of the organic work belonged Tadeusz Romanowicz, who in 1867 (at 24 years of age) published the brochure *O stowarzyszeniach* (On Associations). He informed the reader of different systems of cooperatives and saving banks for the poorer population, above all of the German system of Schutze-Deiltsch. Amongst the democrats who had reservations about the ideal of organic work we should mention the historian from the Lelewel School, Henryk Schmitt.³

As a result, the Galician democracy joined together these traditions in a specific way, retaining the epigone-romantic phraseology, emphasizing the role of patriotic feelings, and at the same time propagating organic work with a selective acceptance of the ideals of positivism. In 1874 Józef Rogosz in the *Tydzień Literacki* bemoaned the weakening of the romantic patriotism of the youth, which “formerly secretly read Słowacki and Mochnacki,” and today “has forgotten that a cold philosopher is not the ideal of man.” The romantic attitude, he believed, is valuable, even if we have to acknowledge the necessity of a “practical direction, which has prevailed in society.”⁴

These romantic exaltations went hand in hand with technical fascination. On the building of the Suez Canal the author of an article in the *Kraj* anticipated that as a result of the development of trade “in ten years time [...] the Viceroy of Egypt will turn into an almost European monarch,” and “a journey round the world will soon become a comfortable stroll.”⁵ Undertaking the printing of *The Mysterious Island* by Jules Verne, the editors of the *Tydzień Literacki* emphasized the importance of

the works of the French writer for the dissemination of knowledge about the achievements of modern technology, as well as of a rationalist look at the world.

Intellectual development in the Polish Kingdom meanwhile adopted a slightly different direction.

In the beginning of the 1870s there appeared a group of “young” positivists, mostly graduates of the Main School (transformed in 1869 into a Russian university)—more radical, unyielding and consistent than Galician liberal democrats and the Warsaw liberals before 1863. The leader was Aleksander Świętochowski, born in 1849, and their press organ became the *Przegląd Tygodniowy* (Weekly Review) established in 1864 and edited by a newcomer from Greater Poland, Adam Wiślicki. This weekly remained the organ of what was then called “progress” up to the end of its existence in 1899, however, its influence peaks in the 1870s.

It is easy to find an analogy between the ideas of the positivists and those of the liberal Warsaw intelligentsia before the January uprising. The “young” are, however, lacking in these gentle, sentimental phrases, so characteristic of Kraszewski, Ruprecht or a large part of the patriotic writings of the early 1860s, and also of the Galicians: the “young” are convinced that they have recognized rational and scientific truths governing the world and that they are called to show them to the Polish public.

Similar convictions characterized previous generations of liberals, too: a self-confidence of the “young” from the beginning of the 1870s is reminiscent of liberal journalism in the first years after the Congress of Vienna. Still, never before had the Polish liberals been so convinced that all who think otherwise show either bad will, or the lamentable incapability of rational thinking. This change in polemic style can be explained in many ways. Partially, it was due to the generation gap which was more sharply marked than in Galicia, where a new generation of liberal journalists was gaining spurs under the eye of the older colleagues. Meanwhile, the former pre-uprising activists in the Kingdom, if they had survived, did not take part in the political life or went into the conservative camp; the young therefore declared themselves against the relatively colorless and solidarist journalism.⁶ The new style of polemics can also be explained by the political situation which was more difficult in the Kingdom than in both remaining Partitions: the possibility of practical political and social activity in Galicia and the Poznań region encouraged a compromise as the moderate attitude could be the way to reach some concrete aims. In the Kingdom, however, where no one had any chance of taking part in legal politics, no

matter how loyalist and moderate he was, it was relatively easier to show radical views in fields far from politics.

In the radical phraseology of the “young” camp, one could also hear the echoes of the democratic journalism of the Great Emigration, by whose mediation the traditions of French radicalism reached Polish political vocabulary. On Polish territory the *Przegląd Tygodniowy* was to a certain degree the precursor of the aggressive polemic style, which was to be embraced in the early twentieth century by new mass political parties, above all socialists and national democrats.

An artistic expression of the enthusiasm of the positivists is the front-cover of the *Przegląd*. From a dark tunnel into the light of day comes a steam engine with the slogan “progress.” In the distance a grate bridge is visible (similar to the Kierbedź Bridge in Warsaw), and beyond the river a panorama of the town with many industrial workshops. In the foreground, there are prickly rose bushes (a possible allusion to the popular patriotic song of that time, *Let us plant roses*), amongst them, however, there appear symbols of the arts and sciences: sculptures and scientific instruments.

The radical, bellicose positivism of the *Przegląd Tygodniowy* was not the only variant of this ideology in the Russian partition. There was also a more moderate version, represented in the early 1870s by the fortnightly *Niwa* (Field) and *Opiekun Domowy* (Protector of the Home) which, however, in 1874–1875 changed editors and accepted a conservative direction. From 1875 the main organ of moderate positivism became the monthly *Ateneum* edited from 1881 by the well-known historian of literature Piotr Chmielowski. On its front-cover appeared the profile of Pallas Athene at the background of classical Greek columns; the mere comparison with the front-cover of the *Przegląd Tygodniowy* indicates a link to a more moderate current in the rationalist tradition: that of calm classicism rather than of progress pulling with the power of a steam engine.

Moderate positivism did not have its unquestionable leader, such as Świętochowski for the radical stream. To the most important of its representatives belonged undoubtedly Bolesław Prus, together with Eliza Orzeszkowa and the aforementioned Piotr Chmielowski, as well as the lawyer and literary critic, Włodzimierz Spasowicz, active in St. Petersburg. The boundaries of the trends were not strict: Orzeszkowa and Chmielowski simultaneously published in the *Przegląd Tygodniowy* and in *Niwa*, whereas Świętochowski published one of his essential texts in the *Ateneum*. Both branches accepted the same assumptions and used the same concepts; they referred also to the same Western, mainly English, authorities. Those

conservatives, however, who criticized the moderates claiming that the logical application of positivist ideals must lead to extreme radicalism (as though on a “slippery slope”—this is a frequent comparison used by contemporary polemicists) were not correct. In essence the moderate positivism of Prus or Spasowicz, as well as the radical version of this ideology in the *Przegląd Tygodniowy* were relatively cohesive ideological systems, very close to each other and in many fragments overlapping. They were, however, separate, each of them retaining an internal logic of its own.

Whilst romantic liberalism drew from German philosophy and partly from the social thought of French utopian socialism, Warsaw positivism draws from English liberal thought. Many works of English thinkers were already published in Polish translation in the 1850s (such as *The Principles of Political Economy* and *On Liberty* by Mill), however, it was the post-uprising generation that experienced them in depth and found in them their gospel. In 1866 the young writer Eliza Orzeszkowa read the *History of Civilization in England* by Henry Thomas Buckle—the basic work of the positivist philosophy of history, basing all features of national culture on the material circumstances of the country. She read it—and was enchanted.

“There is nothing dark there, nothing complicated; there are no interlaced and vocal phrases that would create continuous difficulties; intangible metaphysical curiosities will not be found there. [...] The dominant thought [...] of Buckle’s is: further and further towards learning, towards the light, and through it towards happiness! [...] Our century can victoriously shout: *eureka!* Not because humanity has already achieved happiness—there is still a lot missing for this—but because it found the road there, and having found the road, it is easier to reach the target. That road is: reason.”⁷

Reason not only provides tools to learn about the world; not only does it tell us how to achieve the intended aims; reason also infallibly teaches us what these aims should be, in other words, it provides the moral norms. The positivists are certain that moral truths can be established in a scientific way, i.e. achieved through logical reasoning from a scientific description of reality.

At the basis of this view lies the non-verbalized conviction that the final aims are obvious and there is no need for discussion; they must, therefore, be acknowledged by all thinking people. The positivists never precisely and unambiguously stated their hierarchy of aims, however, it would seem that at the head stood “happiness” or the “satisfaction” of the population. Political freedom as well as the freedom to shape life, economic growth and

welfare, the spreading of education and morality, and even ideals so important for the positivist thinking as “utility” or “altruism”—all these are only roads to the principal aim. The “free development of the life of individuals and societies is the first and main condition of human happiness”—wrote the *Przegląd Tygodniowy* in 1872. To justify a moral norm, it is tantamount to proving that it contributes better than competitive norms to achieve this aim. Even the cremation of corpses, regardless its controversial character, must be introduced as soon as it is proved that it is indispensable from the hygienic point of view.⁸

Since the final aim is and must remain indisputable, the ethical system can become (for the first time in the history of Polish liberal thought) completely independent of religion. Religious ethics is only the degeneration of natural ethics, based on altruism. It has to be remembered, however, that positivists were—sometimes subconsciously—very rigorous moralists: they demanded reforms of morality, they attacked certain concrete norms, but they did not doubt that, in the last resort, some kind of norm exists and is obligatory. An anonymous author was right, claiming in the *Przegląd Tygodniowy* that “morality for positivism is as dear as it is for idealism.”⁹ It can be said that secular morality, challenging the religious one, wishes to prove to everyone that it can be just as demanding and determined as its rival.

This attitude was not weakened by the views of the positivists on the historical origin of morality, proclaimed amongst others by Aleksander Świętochowski. He believed that there are no indispensably and universally obligatory moral laws, neither does there exist an internal moral authority, namely conscience. Świętochowski was a declared determinist, rejecting the very idea of human free will. Only on such a foundation—he believed—can a new, truly humanitarian ethical system be raised: since people are not answerable for their acts, as, for example, Christianity proclaims (because these are determined by their upbringing and the conditions of their existence), then punishment understood as repayment does not have a right of existence. We should aim rather towards such a reorganization of society that will extort the required behavior from individuals. Determinism—in a certain paradoxical way—justified for Świętochowski the freedom of the individual. “If the convictions of individuals do not depend on their free will, because their thoughts and feelings are the necessary result of their nature, as necessary as the insensitivity of a stone or the instinct of an animal, how else will we avoid committing harm, if not by equal distribution of rights of freedom among everyone, without regard to their intellec-

tual difference?"¹⁰ Świętochowski's determinism was—it would seem—a social rather than a biological determinism, but his views in this matter are not free from inconsistency.

Special attention should be paid to the relationship of the post-uprising liberals to religious matters and especially to the Catholic Church. The already existing but rather toned down Catholic-liberal antagonism burst out with a new strength. The context of European history is worth bearing in mind: the pontificate of Pius IX marks the culminating point of the conflict of the Catholic Church with the ideals and political aims of the European liberals. The very idea of social order, spontaneously being created by individuals seeking happiness, was seen by the Catholics as exchanging the principles of the Gospel for egoism and materialism; and the ideal of equality before the law and political freedom endangered the hierarchical order of an ideal Christian society.

What is more important, the actual intellectual atmosphere of the nineteenth century, associated in general with liberalism, induced—as it was often believed—skepticism and disbelief. In Protestant theology, there appeared a liberal current calling into question the inviolability of religious principles and the right of church institutions to impose religious norms on the faithful. The effect of this theological development was an increased hostility of the Roman Catholic Church towards liberalism as a political current. The endeavors of the Pope to maintain his secular power, considered a guarantee of the spiritual independence of the supreme Pontiff, strengthened his hostility towards the movement of Italian unification, at the time universally considered as the standard liberal movement. The *Syllabus of Errors*, issued in December 1864 as a companion to the encyclical *Quanta Cura*, contained amongst others the condemnation of the view, according to which, "the Pope can and should comply with progress, liberalism and modern civilization."¹¹

We cannot enter here into theological and philosophical matters linked with the conflict of Catholic and liberal thought and with the possibilities of a dialogue between them; suffice it to say that in the opinion of both contemporary antagonists the debate had a fundamental character and did not leave any room for compromise. The first Vatican Council, proclaiming the dogma of papal infallibility, further strengthened this conviction. In former times "amongst Catholics there were still those who believed that there is something pure in liberalism which can be reconciled with Christianity: it is only the history of the last few years that has allowed us to look into the face of completely unmasked liberalism and to see its anti-Christ

ugliness,”¹² wrote in 1873 the main opponent of the positivists, the *Przegląd Katolicki* edited at the time by Father Michał Nowodworski, famous later as the initiator and editor of the monumental Catholic Encyclopaedia.

The successes of the Italian national movement linked with the general ideological atmosphere of the era added to the feeling of insecurity among the Catholics. In Polish controversies too, the *Przegląd Tygodniowy* is the attacking side. The positivists did not necessarily have to be warring atheists, more often—it would seem—they were inclined towards agnosticism or even deism. At least some of them could understand the individual faith of an intellectual aiming to know the Absolute. They were, however, convinced that the competition of reason with Catholicism and other institutionalized religions is in principle over, and that these religions can be defended only by superstition and ignorance. On the other hand, the polemics of the *Przegląd Katolicki* have a defensive character. “All anti-Christian elements under the slogan of modern civilization and freedom of thought in the West declared a fight against the Church,”¹³ and “modern culture does not even for a moment stop fighting against Christianity and the Church”¹⁴—such complaints resulted in the calls for the defense of the faith, animated by the hope of a final triumph, but without a vision of success in the closer perspective.

The truculence of the positivists and the defensive attitude of the Catholics are probably most visible in the stylistics and phraseology of both *Przegląds*. The polemic and aggressive tone was until now a feature of publications from the radical-democratic circles, whereas the statements of the liberals, similarly to the conservatives, generally maintained moderation and emphasized the distance towards all extremes. The young positivists broke away from this tradition. “How many painful losses were incurred from the monastic education of our young girls? How much poison has filtered from these sources into our organisms? [...] We hear that monasteries take children away from their parents [...] that thousands of souls rot, die or are put to sleep in the iron embrace of fanaticism and ignorance. This whole disgusting drama takes place before our very eyes, [...] and we [...] call out that it is not yet time for a cure.”¹⁵ Here is an example of anti-clerical rhetoric taken from an article criticizing the middle road and the lack of radicalism in Polish society.

The *Przegląd Katolicki* disputed with the organ of positivists, but these polemics lacked fervor. “In their anti-religious escapades our periodicals become not only blasphemous, but even astound with naïve malicious

comicalities. Prominent amongst them the *Przegląd Tygodniowy*¹⁶—Father Nowodworski complained in 1872. The *Przegląd Tygodniowy* in one of its most aggressive texts (most probably written by Świętochowski) acknowledged the statement of the Catholic weekly that criticized the emancipation of women as laughable and suitable for an amusing after dinner talk. This statement was compared to the advice which a Papua would give to a European.¹⁷ In the polemics the *Przegląd Katolicki* limited itself to the claim that similar texts compromise the positivists, and ended with the maxim *Si tacuisses, philosophus manisses*.¹⁸ At times it tried to hit back with a similarly aggressive style, comparing for example contemporary anticlericals with the heretical Byzantine emperor Constantine V, who “at the moment of his baptism defiled the baptismal water”; similarly the anticlericals of today “do not fail to foul the sacraments [...]. To the former the smells of the stable were dear, these give out the scent of a tavern.”¹⁹ Such invectives, however, occurred seldom and—if one can refer to an improvable impression—they seem far more ineffective than the provocations of the positivists, who have at their disposal the anticlerical clichés fixed since the epoch of Enlightenment.

Amongst these clichés the most lively was the negative stereotype of the Jesuit order credited by the liberals (not only in Poland) with the worst possible crimes, and perceived as a secret organization aspiring to rule the world, which forms an analogy with the attitude of many conservatives and Catholics towards Freemasonry. The phraseology of the positivists in the religious questions and the ironically aggressive method of their polemic were borrowed from the French Enlightenment. The positivists could also draw from the radical journalism of the Polish emigration in France in the 1830s and 1840s. Most probably, it was then that the phraseology of radical anticlericalism for the first time gained an essential meaning in Polish political propaganda. In Polish liberal thought, however, the tradition of radical anticlericalism was rather absent before the 1870s; its integration into Polish liberalism occurred in the columns of the *Przegląd Tygodniowy*.

And yet in spite of appearances, this tradition was not the most important element of the Polish Positivists’ attitude to Catholics and religion. Positivists well knew that in the Kingdom of the 1870s only two social groups could help in spreading ideals of organic work in the countryside: landowners and clergy, and among them the clergy is more important because of its close contact with the peasantry. The help of the Church—if not of the hierarchy, then at least the ranks of priests—would have a key importance for the realization of positivist ideals.

Therefore—in spite of phraseology sharper than before—we observe an attitude similar to that of Polish liberals in earlier periods. European “enlightened” trends in the second half of the eighteenth and in the nineteenth century could have a twofold attitude towards the Church: either—in accordance with the tradition of the French revolution—they could aim to limit, and finally to suppress completely the participation of the Church in social life, or, acting in the Austrian Josephinist tradition, they could strive not so much to weaken the Church, as rather to subject it to the lay authority and to use its influences to their advantage. Warsaw positivism accepted its phraseology from this first trend, but tried to act practically according to the second.

“Should the activity [...] of the clergy be limited only to religious matters, or spread also into social life? So many times humanity protested against the intervention of the clergy in secular affairs that we are afraid to answer affirmatively to the above question. And yet it is so ... it must even be so. Just as a clerk, industrialist, landowner, a craftsman, so also the priest should be a citizen of his country and [...] work towards the happiness of his society.”

The choice of a “Josephinist” orientation is therefore clear; but the clergy, in order to be useful, must fulfil certain conditions. Above all education: the government, it is true, had dissolved the monasteries, in which “fanaticism and ignorance grew,” but the state of the education of secular clergy, although a little better than that of the monks, is not satisfactory either. That is why “because of their intellectual insufficiency” the clergy cannot realize that which is expected from them. “Every sermon should be an instructive lesson of moral and practical reasoning. [...] Today the value and usefulness of the clergy relies only on their services towards the people [...]. A priest who does not engage in civil activity is a cosmopolitan, he is an agent of the Roman curia, and not an inhabitant of this country.” Only after a change in attitude of the clergy “the Church will become not only a temple, but also a school; the vicarage will become a focus of the moral Enlightenment of the people; the parish will be transformed into an organ which is truly helpful and strictly joined with the collective system of society.”²⁰

The above quotes come from a programmatic cycle of articles, entitled *Praca u podstaw* (Work at the basis). They successively discussed institutions that can provide the means for organic works—apart from the school, local government or communal saving banks, there was amongst them a place also for the parish. However, the endeavor to harness the Church into

organic work in rural areas had even less chance of success than all earlier attempts. Above all because of the external situation: the positivists could not boast of any influence on the state authorities, so they did not have anything to offer the Church in exchange for its cooperation.

Even putting aside the political situation of the Kingdom, the outlook of this practical cooperation did not look rosy. The dignitaries of the Duchy of Warsaw, trying to subject the Church to state authorities, often at least assured that there are true Catholics; Supiński was tactfully silent about his own religious convictions. Young positivists, however, proposing a deal with the Church did not conceal that it will be necessary only until popular education develops to such a degree that the peasant can abandon his religious outlook. The positivists believed that they were already offering a concession—contrary to numerous radical anticlerical thinkers abroad, they acknowledged the right of the Church to act on public forum. However, according to their ideals, the Church would essentially cooperate in weakening its own position. It is clear that such an offer could not be accepted. On the other hand, the contemporary Church differed from that of the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries. It rejected all enlightened influences that were still alive amongst part of the clergy in the times of the Duchy of Warsaw, and was probably even less ready than the liberals for a compromise with people of different outlook. It would doubtlessly reject the offer of the positivists, even if were more tactful and less aggressive.

In spite of all this, the offer was placed in good faith. The *Przegląd Katolicki* was only partly correct in suspecting that attacks on “clericalism” were only ill disguised attacks on religion.²¹ Sometimes it could be so, but not always: it sometimes even happened that the positivists emphasized that they are not opponents of religion. The problem originated rather from the different styles of thinking. The journalists of the *Przegląd Tygodniowy* were truly convinced that the worldly happiness of mankind must be the highest ethical aim and that sooner or later everyone must understand this, the hierarchy of the Church included. They supposed, therefore, that in order to convince the Church of the sense of these or other moves, it is enough to prove that these moves are indispensable for the worldly happiness of mankind. In their image of the world there was no place for the possibility that the Church could seriously strive for what it considers right for the salvation of the soul: any declaration of the Church on this subject they treated—it seems—as a conscious leading into error.

“In vain! The Middle Age passed never to return, asceticism, renouncing worldliness and contemplation of the insignificance of the world—do not

tempt. Nowadays the world lives and maintains itself by knowledge.” These words come from the cited article dedicated to the role of the parish in *Praca u Podstaw*, they are not therefore dictated by anticlerical passion—this text had an amicable character, trying to encourage the cooperation. In the opinion of the positivists, these words express a truth so obvious that every even slightly thinking clergyman must accept them and then join the followers of organic work. Whilst proposing a cooperation for the organic development of the country to the more enlightened part of the Catholics, the positivists were not able to hide their astonishment that “in Europe, in a civilized country, in the century of the bravest discoveries” there can exist such an “anachronistic phenomenon” as the *Przegląd Katolicki*.²²

The positivists, as well as their opponents, were convinced of the ideological consequences of scientific views—that it is impossible to be simultaneously a good Darwinist and a good Catholic. Completely exceptional is one of the texts in the *Ateneum*, which proclaims: “Darwinism will not manage to shake truly well-founded bases of personal conviction and faith, just as all other reforms in science until now have not managed to do. [...] The might of the Creator will seem not less miraculous if we presume that the world was created under the influence of his will not at once [...], but in an immeasurable length of time which for the human concept seems to be colossal, but in comparison with eternity it is brought down to the meaning of one moment.”²³

In this way, the attitude of the radical positivists to the Church continued the traditional standpoint of the Polish liberals. Aiming at a practical cooperation in concrete matters, at the same time they introduced a new element of violent anticlerical and at moments even anti-religious phraseology into the history of Polish liberalism.

The distinctive position of moderate positivists is marked very clearly in their attitude to religion. As in all other matters, here too we observe the same basic assumptions as with the radical positivists. These assumptions, however, led to different conclusions. Bolesław Prus, similarly to the radicals, built his ethical program on complementary ideas of altruism and egoism enlightened by reason (he heartily praised the ethical ideas of Świętochowski). Whilst, however, the radicals emphasized the superiority of the new principles over Christian ethics, Prus considered this program only the consequence and application of evangelical principles.²⁴ He did not doubt that the development of learning cannot kill faith in God, and he treated the anticlericalism of the *Przegląd Tygodniowy* with irony. For example, he ridiculed the article in the *Przegląd* which criticizes the

church-fairs and the pilgrimages, considering that the whole argumentation against them can be used equally well against the trips, propagated by the radical weekly, of young members of the intelligentsia around the country.

Even striving to fuse Poles and Jews into one society did not, according to Prus, exclude respect for religious diversity. When, in 1877, public messengers received new uniforms, the "Orthodox Jew messengers" refused to wear them for religious reasons, not being able "to wear clothes which are a mixture of wool and linen." Prus comments: "This affair amused the public, although in essence it is serious. [...] It is not a whim of individuals, but a strict carrying out of the instructions of the Law, which on no account deserves to be laughed at [...]. We do not therefore doubt that their employers will agree with their demands—it is impossible to suppose that a dozen or so citizens lost bread [...] only for the reason that they remained faithful to their faith."²⁵

Polish liberals and democrats, fighting with the position of the Church in the name of reason, progress and the freedom of conscience, stood before a dilemma: Catholicism was traditionally linked with the national culture, whereas in a situation when Polishness was endangered by Germanization and Russification, anticlericals could easily be accused of betraying the national interest. The positivists in the Kingdom—as we have seen—did not avoid the conflict, the Polish liberals of the Prussian partition, however, chose a different route.

The Poznań region was entering a post-uprising era with a strong, quarter of a century old tradition of liberal thought and politics. After an interval caused by the repressions of the 1850s, the liberal environment was reborn around the *Dziennik Poznański* (Poznań Daily) published from 1859. After frequent changes in the editorial office in the 1860s, in January 1870 the chief editor became Franciszek Dobrowolski, one of the moderate Reds during the January uprising and for a short time a member of the insurrectionary clandestine national government in September 1863. The *Dziennik* remained under the editorship of Dobrowolski for over twenty-five years, up to his death in 1895.

To the middle of the 1870s, the attitude of the Poznań liberals in religious matters was close to the attitude of the Galician democrats and the pre-1863 Polish liberals. Avoiding clashes, acknowledging the importance of Catholicism for the culture of the nation, they were opposed to the influences of the Church in political life, and carefully differentiated religiousness from "ultramontanism," namely all that they considered as com-

pliant with the political influences of the Papacy. Pleased with the growth of religion in the Poznań region, Marcelli Motty in the year 1865 attributed it to the steady growth of “the moral and intellectual level of our clergy,” but also to “the freedom of conscience so hated by the unconditional worshippers of Syllabus.”²⁶

The Poznań liberals criticized the clergy for calling for the political unity of Catholics, fearing that the excessive manifestations of religious ties would weaken national unity so fundamental in the time of rising Prussian persecutions. The culminating point of the controversy came at the end of the 1860s and in the beginning of the 1870s, i.e. more or less at the time when the Warsaw positivists were having a battle with the *Przegląd Katolicki*. In 1870 one of the Polish conservative politicians proposed that every candidate in the approaching elections should declare their support for the secular power of the Pope, the defense of the monastic orders, religious schools and church marriages. The *Dziennik Poznański* opposed this outright, and in 1873, criticizing the alliance with German Catholics, wrote simply that “the interest of the Church is not always identical with that of states and nations.”²⁷

Poznań liberals, faithful to the tradition of the 1840s, were developing the institutions of civil society, and fostering the growth of the economic, educational and cultural societies. Archbishop Ledóchowski, the object of frequent attacks of the *Dziennik*, forbade the clergy to belong to the Towarzystwo Oświaty Ludowej (Popular Education Society) established by the liberals in 1872. In the second half of the 1880s the conflict started to weaken. *Kulturkampf*, directed in principle against the Church, in the Poznań region was directed against Polishness—and the liberals acknowledged that the national interest demands a cease-fire. In the beginning of 1878, Archbishop Ledóchowski suspended his prohibition of participating in the work of the Towarzystwo Oświaty Ludowej; although the organization was closed several months later by the Prussian authorities, the rapprochement of former rivals became a fact.²⁸

In the face of danger, the liberals of the Prussian partition chose the tactics opposed to that of the *Przegląd Tygodniowy*. There were many causes for this. Besides the danger of *Kulturkampf*, an important role was played by the tradition of national solidarity in the Poznań region. This tradition, in turn, was conditioned by an earlier than in the remaining partitions franchising of peasants, which removed one of the basic sources of social conflict. Another fundamental factor was that—contrary to the Warsaw case—the conflict with Catholicism in Poznań did not have a prin-

cial character, since it was not so deeply connected with positivist philosophy in its anti-religious interpretation. Individual statements could sound very anticlerical, but for the Poznanians the compromise was not such an impossibility as for Świętochowski and his companions.

Świętochowski himself did not condemn the tactics of the Poznań liberals; he admitted that from the liberal point of view the situation in the Prussian partition was like a vicious circle, in which the dilemma whether to back the Church in the name of national solidarity or to attack it in the name of the ideals of progress, does not have any good solution.²⁹ All the same, the consequence of the Poznań liberals' choice was a rapprochement with the conservatives and a gradual weakening of the liberal identity. Although the *Dziennik* was considered a liberal periodical at least to the end of the editorship of Franciszek Dobrowolski, conservatism and Catholicism gained dominance not only in the political life of Greater Poland, but also in the camp of the Poznań liberals.

The attitude to religion and the Church was different amongst the Galician democrats. Similar in this regard to the Poznań liberals, the democrats from the Austrian partition were not as fundamentally hostile to Catholicism as the young positivists from Warsaw, although in concrete matters they very courageously opposed the views of the Church. They did not, however, come close to the Church and to the conservatives as the Poznań liberals did, but they maintained a separate position.

Some statements from Galicia were even sharper than the views of the positivists from the Kingdom. When a certain medic from Lwów demanded the removal of nuns from Galician hospitals (because a hospital is not a religious institution),³⁰ he acted strictly after the model of French anticlericalism, but completely against the Warsaw positivists, who, as we have seen, demanded increased participation of the clergy in welfare work. Galician liberals were indignant at the fate of Barbara Ubryk, a mentally ill nun held by her sisters in seclusion, whose fate was heard far beyond Galicia, and prompted the demand of state control over the monasteries or even of their dissolution. They expressed the hope that the Vatican Council would carry out indispensable reform in the Church. Ludwik Gumpłowicz in the columns of the *Kraj* was opposed to the state control of the Church, he demanded, however, a fundamental separation of the Church from the state—he belonged, therefore, to the few Polish liberals opposed to the “Josephinist” position.³¹

The linking of radical anticlericalism in particular matters with the lack of any significant hostility against the Church in general outlook is clearly

visible in the views of Jan Lam, the most eminent liberal journalist of Galicia of the 1860s and 1870s. As regards teaching of religion at schools, he expressed an opinion which at the time must have seemed very radical, and only in the beginning of that twentieth century gained the support of a large part of the intelligentsia. "The family and the religious community are the places where the child should learn about religion, the state will not teach it in its schools, neither should it teach, because the state as such does not acknowledge any religion" and "it should ensure internal and external freedom for all religions. [...] We, the liberal camp, leave this teaching to the Catholic, the Orthodox, the Protestant churches or the Jewish synagogue. Every week a certain number of hours should be put aside for the child, intended for religious instruction by the appropriate clergyman, supported by the religious community, on premises belonging to that particular religion."³²

At the same time, however, Lam treated "positivism and idealism" not as antagonistic, but complementary trends. Through them "the intellectual movement of mankind strives forward. These trends have parted only superficially because they are aiming at one and the same knowledge, and clash with each other only there, when one wrongly encroaches into the territory of the other. [...] If [...] positivism, not content with an analysis of collected fragments of knowledge, wants to build ethical or aesthetic systems, excluding from them everything which is not proven, and yet exists—or if idealism invades education and forces on it its *a priori* certainties as though they were reliable road signs, then a clash occurs, from which both sides come out not without injury." We read these words in an article which opens the first issue of the newly founded liberal weekly, and therefore can pass as a programmatic text.

Even whilst opposing the teaching of religion in schools, Lam emphasizes that "the youth need to be brought up in the Christian spirit, they must be filled with faith, charity and hope," so that they did not fall into "unabashed materialist negation"—but the current way of teaching the catechism in school does not fulfil these tasks.³³

The citation above demonstrates that philosophically motivated anticlericalism inclining towards atheism, is the constitutive characteristics distinguishing the group concentrated around the *Przegląd Tygodniowy* from other Polish liberal and positivist directions of the time.

"Progress" belonged to the basic concepts of positivist thought. It was the same with all (not only Polish) liberals throughout the 19th century, but in the journalism of the *Przegląd Tygodniowy* this idea is men-

tioned more frequently than in earlier times, and the qualification of any given occurrence as “progressive” or “reactionary” decides—to a higher degree than formerly—about approval or condemnation. Progress is an objective process which can perhaps be accelerated or slowed down by human activity, but it cannot be held back. The positivist idea of progress was, in the eyes of its followers, an inductive, i.e. fully scientific generalization flowing from the knowledge of human history. Simultaneously, there disappears the religious element, so strong still in the romantic ideal of progress.

Various ways of understanding progress provide a good observation point to notice the difference between the two branches of positivism in the Kingdom. For moderate positivists, the progress is above all gradual. “This is our supposedly biggest misfortune that we would want, in one step, to stand on the peak of happiness [...]. This is a fatal mistake, for which [...] we will always be punished [...], until long, strenuous and persistent work takes the place of momentary fervor.” A hidden patriotic declaration can of course be suspected, where “happiness” is Polish independence. It will be more interesting, however, to see here a typically liberal faith in moderate progress, often slighted by impatient enthusiasts from the *Przegląd Tygodniowy*. It is true—continues the author of the cited article—the ideal of equality, proclaimed formerly by Christ, only in our times becomes introduced into life gradually and with resistance, but there are grounds for optimism: if we compare our era with the past, “we will experience a certain relief and we will come to understand the essential progress in the field of thought, feeling and action. Reminding ourselves that in antiquity a slave was used as an object [...]—we will at least agree that today things are a little better. [...] A just appraisal of all subjects [...] must be compared with that which preceded them.”

“This world is imperfect [...] methods which would ensure the quickest fulfilling of the wishes of progress has hitherto not been invented and it seems that we will be waiting a long time for them”—these words stray from the certainty of the *Przegląd Tygodniowy*, although, after all, they come from the same tradition of thought. “Progress is not some magic word which would [...] raise factories from nothing [...]. No! It is only a word that warms the young breast, awakening in it all noble feelings [...]; it is a word which strengthens our soul with new life.”³⁴ Did the author treat the concept of progress only instrumentally, as a mobilizing slogan which, in favorable conditions, can become self-fulfilling prophecy? Probably not: the positivists were—using the Popperian terminology—historicists and they

believed in the inevitability of progress. It can only be said that the article in the *Niwa* relatively strongly emphasizes the dependency of progress on the activities of the individual.

The radicals from the *Przegląd Tygodniowy*, convinced that they had discovered the laws of social development, more optimistically than their predecessors judged the possibility of perfecting human nature. "Whenever I look at a Polish tavern [...] tattered and hideous, [...] so many times the following image appears in my mind's eyes: amongst trees and a garden there stands a tidy house with a great room and a platform for a musician or orator. Under the trees, benches and tables. It is a holiday and everyone has assembled willingly. One of the elders [...] first organizes a race for the young farm-hands, wrestling, then games, in the interval somebody reads a passage from a folk magazine or book, and the teacher or someone else from the intelligentsia explains a phenomenon of nature or explains the read extract. Next they proceed in a dance, and the older farmers discuss farming, an experienced administrator suggesting some subject to them. Goblets of beer or mead circulate in moderation [...]. This is an image from the twentieth century!"³⁵

The author of this lyrical picture stresses that he has not given himself up to utopian dreams. On the contrary, he emphasizes very eagerly that self-interest is the main motive of human activities and it will be the self-interest, which will force changes for the better, transform taverns in the spirit described above, and rebuild the whole of society according to the positivist program.

The moderate positivists were not so sure. In one of his humorous stories, with which Prus illustrates his deliberations, "society, this scapegoat of all the parties who experience on it their own theories," is presented in the form of an emaciated goat. It was proposed to its owner—in accordance with Darwin's teaching about the evolution of species—to transform the goat into a sturgeon in order to increase income. When as a result of getting used to life in water, the goat almost lost its life, its owner came to the conclusion: "evidently it is a type of goat which by no possible means can be changed into a sturgeon."³⁶ This statement—with remote echoes of the famous formula of Kant's about the crooked timber of humanity, from which nothing can be perfectly carved—can be treated as a motto of Prus' reflections on society.

Both radical and moderate positivists, however, in principle agreed about the necessity of transforming society. The ideal of the organic work, accepted from the pre-1863 Warsaw liberals, and indirectly from the

Poznań organicists of the 1840s, was to serve this purpose. In the course of time this ideal, initially with moderately liberal connotations, became divided into various trends. So, the ideology of organic work could adopt conservative, religious, and in the later period also nationalist or populist colors. Warsaw positivists provide the best example of joining the idea of organic work with liberal social thought.

They could accomplish it because from the beginning of the 1880s they had at their disposal a theoretical framework, drawn from the works of Herbert Spencer. Whereas from antiquity the comparison of society to an organism generally served conservative tendencies, justifying the division into the ruling and ruled strata, as well as the necessity of subjecting the interest of individuals to general interest, in Spencer we are dealing with a rare variant of organicist theory that is liberal and individualist. Whilst a biological organism sacrifices an individual cell for the good of the whole, according to Spencer, the opposite is true in a social organism: its good can be brought down to the good of individual “cells.” In this way the organic work gained a solid scientific foundation. Bohemia was considered to be “a classical land of organic work”³⁷; already in the 1860s the Poznań liberals were taking it as an example, whilst in the Russian Partition the Czechs functioned up to the 1890s alongside the negative Indian example³⁸—the different fates of these two peoples showed two possibilities of the future fate of Poland.

As so often in history, the fine arts were to serve as an instrument for transforming social attitudes. The master of the Warsaw positivists in artistic matters was the eminent French cultural historian Hippolyte Taine, for whom the role of scientific aesthetics was not to decide on the criteria of beauty but only to explain the social genesis of aesthetic principles in any era. This descriptive theory of aesthetics was transformed by the Warsaw positivists into a normative one: reading Taine they reached the conclusion that aesthetics should be reshaped so as to suit the modern, democratizing capitalist society. In this way, the fight for new aesthetics was to be the means of the acceleration of social changes.

Piotr Chmielowski, the most eminent literary critic amongst the positivists, defended the right of art to describe vice in the columns of the *Przegląd Tygodniowy*: great literature always “took people as they are in reality [...] We should not spread morality, but truth.” Similar quotes may remind us of the literature of modernism one generation later, but in essence, they mean something completely different. Immorality in literature, says Chmielowski, means “not facts [...], but a way of presenting them.”

What is immoral is “taking delight in disgusting, dirty scenes only because they are picturesque, speculating on the human sensuality and testiness without any higher aim, without any thought, without any tendency.”³⁹ In this way morality in literature is synonymous with its utility. Such a position, if represented by authors less mature than Chmielowski, had to turn into caricature. The aims to which mankind are heading are “real, clear and distinct”—wrote in 1872 “a graduate of law and administration,” Jan Maurycy Kamiński, contemplating the “relationship of poetry to social life.” These aims are “a heated room, and warm food, and [...] general education, and equality of rights [...] Society has such aims before itself, the aims of science are the same—art and especially poetry should also aim towards them.”⁴⁰

Another critic of the *Przegląd Tygodniowy*, Antoni Pilecki, gave poets a more concrete task. “Faint images of a morbid imagination, thoughtless admiration of a flower or a dew do not have a right of existence in contemporary poetry. Poetry as a product of social activity should bring benefit to society. Socio-economic matters present inexhaustible material for poetry [...] Let us take the matter of the economic liberation of woman, what beautiful and poetic thoughts occur to us in this regard. [...] The view of wide streets, great cities, splendid edifices, great factories, continuous movement and life, does this not arouse in us the feeling of the power of man?”

These words should not be associated with the aesthetics of twentieth century futurists. The positivists’ fascination with modernity applies only to practical improvements, not to the aesthetics of a new type of culture. Poetry was therefore to popularize the ideals of the positivists’ outlook amongst the simpletons. “Let us take an example. The poetical picture presenting a maiden, who has to die of hunger and poverty, or fall into the excrement of moral depravation because centuries’ old prejudices do not allow her to earn enough money for a piece of bread with honest work—this will more understandably and more strongly speak to the hearts and minds of the masses than the logical argument of a thinker.”⁴¹

The aesthetics of the positivists, integrally related with their ethical system and plans of social reconstruction, did not mean the negation of Polish romanticism. The positivists sincerely denounced the insurgent tradition seen as the fruit of the influences of romantic poetry (so believed the main popularizer of Western positivism, Father Franciszek Krupiński). Włodzisław Spasowicz, who very clearly differentiated the artistic output of Polish romanticism (appraised univocally favorably) from its political attitude

(subjected to outspoken criticism), took a position that was typical for positivists.

Criticizing the second-rate epigons of romanticism, positivists remained under the great spell of Mickiewicz and Słowacki. These two, according to the positivists, deserved praise even from the point of view of utilitarian aesthetics as unequalled realists in presenting human passions and feelings. No wonder, therefore, that Antoni Pilecki in his above-quoted ultra-positivist poetical manifesto could mention *In Switzerland* by Juliusz Słowacki as an unequalled example of real poetry, and finish his deliberations with an expression of hope that positivism “maybe” can await “its” Mickiewicz.”

So the young positivists defending Romantic poetry rejected all attempts of “reviving the literary corpse: classicism. [...] Greek tragedies, even the most superb, lead the modern reader into a world which is completely strange to him, primitive, immature. French tragedies, even the most superb, always are scented with a conceited rhetoric, falsity and the obedience of school formulae. [...] The untimely defence of classicism is one of the sad symptoms of the reactionary whims in literature. [...] Not to classicism should we be called, but [...] to practical work, instructive energy and robustness of thought.”⁴² It suffices to remember the opinions of Wincenty Niemojowski half a century before in order to see what a great influence romanticism had on the Warsaw positivists.

The program of utilitarian aesthetics was part of a wider educational offensive. The aim was not so much to convince people to care for their personal material conditions: there is no reason to suppose that the ideas of romanticism or the domination of the values of the nobility in Polish culture really pulled people away from the care for everyday life. Essential, however, was the transformation of the hierarchy of professed values, so that the natural human inclination to improve the material situation did not meet with the condemnation of public opinion.

Two matters above all attracted attention: the possibilities of wage-earning for women and the dissemination of technical schooling. In the question of women, the positivists were not radicals. Of course, they demanded the equality of the civil rights of both sexes (the *Przegląd Katolicki*, after all, also agreed with this) and (what was considered less obvious) the admittance of women to scientific institutions, including universities. As the most important, however, they considered providing women with the possibilities to earn their living. They wanted to achieve this by creating a friendly social atmosphere around women engaged in professional activi-

ties, as well as by a suitable education reform and finally through the creation of suitable work places, mainly in petty trade and crafts.⁴³

The positivists believed that the main social function of women is the role of wife and mother, but they wanted to secure the existence for those women who do not find a husband. The positivists in Warsaw did not write about the calling of women in such old-fashioned tones as the Galician democrat, Tadeusz Romanowicz, who worried that “not every [woman] can occupy the elevated position of the priestess of family hearth, the queen of the heart of a man, mother and tutor of the young generation,” and only for those, who “will not fulfil their own destiny” he wanted the possibility of work.⁴⁴ Only in Galicia did people write so movingly, in Warsaw a scientific language of sociology was in use. In spite of a different phraseology, however, the liberals in the Kingdom held essentially similar opinions. We should not condemn them too harshly for antifeminism—given the existing conditions, their program was sufficiently courageous and controversial.

The second problem—the spreading of technical education—occupied an incomparably greater space. The issue at stake was of vital personal importance for the positivists—it was the problem of the jobs for the intelligentsia. The overproduction of intelligentsia was—and is—a characteristic of backward countries. The problem in the Kingdom was all the more keen because as a result of the politics of Russification there was no chance—as in Galicia—of finding employment in bureaucracy. The directing of the surplus of the intelligentsia into practical jobs, the reversal of the rush to gymnasias and directing the youth towards the (not yet existing) technical schools was to solve the problem of the “intelligent proletariat.” It would assure the creation of a middle industrial and commercial personnel (which would replace the Germans who were often brought in specifically for these jobs) and would also contribute to the rise in prestige of paid work. In 1873 in the columns of *Niwa* Eliza Orzeszkowa considered the foundation of even one technical school in the Kingdom as “one of the most urgent needs of our society.”⁴⁵

The general change of attitudes should manifest itself in everyday behavior which should be shaped not by sacrifice but by duty. To spend money on charities instead of repaying a debt in a shop is to bring an honest shopkeeper to bankruptcy. This is a clear, symbolic summary of harm produced by falsely understood “sacrifice” performed at the cost of real duties. “*Small virtues*”—this title of the cycle of Eliza Orzeszkowa’s articles summarizes the educational ideal of the positivists very well. The change in the model of education was to produce in the long run a change in the

social structure. As numerous liberals before, the positivists longed for the emergence of a middle class in Poland, traditionally seen as the best social basis for liberal thought.

Education, according to the positivists, had to embrace both young and old. The ideals were the same in both cases—the only differences concerned some particular questions like the physical education of children. Realizing the weakness (and alien character) of the school system, the positivists enthusiastically propagated self-education. Jan Jeleński paid much attention to this problem in the first half of the 1870s. The translation of Samuel Smiles' book "Self-help" belonged to the most often recommended works encouraging self-education. The positivists especially relied on the influence on the intelligentsia. This group was to serve as a leverage, setting in motion the whole Polish society and pushing it on the way to a transformation which would bring it closer to the societies of the West. It was therefore necessary first to educate the intelligentsia.

In large cities—it would seem—the matter was easier. Here, the positivists could always count on their faithful readers and followers. They realized, however, that success could only come about by changes in the countryside. They rejoiced on every indication of social activities in the small towns, such as amateur performance or concert, the formation of a voluntary fire brigade or the establishment of a school or a local newspaper whose "editorial office becomes the center and the focal point of social interests."⁴⁶ In all this the positivists wanted to see the beginnings of a great, self-organizing movement of Polish intelligentsia.

They understood, however, that the provincial intelligentsia would not cope with this great task. In the villages, admittedly, in the opinion of the positivists something had already been done: a franchise was completed and a new legislation left to the village local government some margin of freedom. In some ways, the situation could seem to be easier than that before 1863: the field was opening for the country intelligentsia which in practice meant landowners and the clergy. The success of the positivists' program in the country depended on their support. The clergy have already been mentioned; a new attitude of the positivists to the landowners was also visible.

Before 1863 most of the Polish liberals—as generally the Poles active in politics—themselves belonged to the nobility or originated from it. Even groups of the intelligentsia with a clearly distinctive consciousness (the Poznań followers of organic work) saw the nobility as the embodiment of the Polish national character both in its good and bad features. Already in

the first half of the century, the separate self-identification of the intelligentsia was slowly growing—but in spite of this, it is difficult to speak of “the gentry problem” in Polish liberal thought in the way that one can speak about the Jewish or peasant problem. The sense of community between the liberal intelligentsia and the nobility was still too strong.

The situation began to change in the 1850s, although both groups remained by and large in the white camp before the January uprising. After 1863, matters went further: the intelligentsia, the main supplier of liberal ideas in Poland, clearly separated itself from the nobility which was much weakened by a franchise reform and by repression after the uprising. It was necessary for Polish liberalism to define its attitude towards the nobility in the same way as to other social problems of the era.

This relationship shows a certain resemblance to the relationship of the positivists to the clergy. From both groups, did the positivists expect help in the spreading of their ideals. The landowners were not to distance themselves from the peasants but to gain their confidence, cooperate with them in the local governments, distribute amongst them popular educational literature and advertise new methods of farming. The positivists, in the same way as earlier Andrzej Zamoyski and Józef Supiński, considered the English aristocracy the best example for the Polish landowners. The Polish gentry, so long as it follows the English footsteps, can retain its social position. To win over the landowners was important even for another reason. This group was still (much to the distress of the positivists) important in setting the tone of the public opinion. If only then—we saw this argumentation already in 1864 in Powidaj and it was to be often repeated in the years to come—the nobility would have begun to send their sons to craft schools instead of to gymnasias, the rest of society would soon follow and a change in the hierarchy of values would become a fact.

The principal idea that the nobility can keep its position through playing the leading part in the modernizing changes is not far from the idea proclaimed before the 1863 uprising by some of the Whites. Simultaneously, however, the landed gentry were attacked for not fulfilling their patriotic task sharper than at any other time in Polish liberal tradition. In theory, positivist thought treated the landed gentry more mercifully than the clergy, in practice, however, the difference was very small and both groups were severely criticized for not fulfilling the tasks set to them—according to the positivists—by society.

The journalists of the *Przegląd Tygodniowy* seldom had doubts: polemics were used to reprimand the outside opponents whereas, within their

own camp, unity and self-assurance seemed to reign. Differences referred to secondary matters, there existed, however, one essential problem which was a perennial source of doubts for the positivists: this was the Jewish question.

As a matter of principle, there should be no doubt: assimilation, namely making the Jews similar to the Christian population surrounding them, was the program of Warsaw positivists as it was of other European liberals of this era. The program of assimilation was proclaimed by the weekly *Izraelita* established in 1866 attacking the Jewish orthodoxy opposed to assimilation with equal strength as the anti-Jewish attitude of the Christians. *Izraelita* was demanding from the Jews—in exactly the same way as the *Przegląd Tygodniowy*—to “cast down [...] all signs of exclusion.”⁴⁷ The Jews were to melt with the Christian population, retaining their separate religion as the only element of their distinctiveness. Such a program was, it would seem, the most natural ally of Polish liberalism and even of democratic radicalism. In the whole of Europe, the Jews stood in the first line of the followers of liberalism as an ideology that enabled them to benefit from civil and political rights previously reserved for the Christian population. In August 1872 the *Izraelita* published an enthusiastic article *Swoboda i judaizm* (Freedom and Judaism) which presented the Jewish biblical roots of the idea of individual liberty. Nobody supposed then that the connection between liberalism and Judaism would soon become a weapon both for anti-Semites and anti-liberals.

The Warsaw positivists as opposed to e.g. Hungarian or Austro-German liberals did not undertake a close cooperation with the assimilated Jewish circles. So full of optimism about the possibilities of social change, they clearly hesitated here. Should assimilation occur through directing the Jews to work on the land (this was an old idea which appeared from time to time ever since the late eighteenth century), or rather through the development of education? Are the Jews themselves guilty of the slow progress of assimilation or is the hostility of the society surrounding them to blame? All these opinions can be found in the columns of the *Przegląd Tygodniowy*.

These are not only “technical” doubts relating to the way of realizing an idea. Debates on the Jewish question made flaws in the coherent “progressive” program clearly visible. It is difficult to resist the impression that the positivists considered the Jewish question more difficult than all the other problems that result from political and social backwardness. For the liberal project of nation-building, the Jews were a special challenge,

greater than other territorially compact ethnic minorities. They formed a breach in the vision of the uniform society comprising of “organically” related strata embracing the whole population of a given area.

At first, most of the positivists wanted an immediate integration of Jews and Christians. This radicalism caused continuous disputes with the *Izraelita* whose basic tendency did not differ from the positivists’ ideas. The assimilated Jews who were editing the magazine, however, clearly saw the level of the difficulties and were inclined to proceed gradually. When in 1879 the *Izraelita* came out with the concept of reforming the Jewish religious schools (the heders), a daily newspaper *Nowiny* (Novelties) (edited at that time by Świętochowski,) reacted very strongly. Reacting on the accusation of lack of knowledge about the problem, *Nowiny* wrote: “It is as though for 14 years we had not looked every week at such a typical heder as among our press is the *Izraelita*, which still cannot understand the possibility of the merging of two tribes. We know of heders, but we do not recognize them in any way, either purified or dirty. We only wish that the citizens of one country were brought up together, that their brotherhood would not be an empty word.”⁴⁸

The great expectations of the positivists counting on the immediate Polonization of the Jews implied demands that the Jews could in no way meet. This led to disappointment and to the opinion that Jews who should at some time in the future merge with the Polish society, as yet are still completely alien to it. This disappointment with the assimilation and the conviction about the permanently “alien” character of the Jews (*Przegląd Tygodniowy* criticized the editors of the *Izraelita* for opposing the opinion that Jews are foreign on Polish soil!)⁴⁹ was soon to open the way to the ideology of anti-Semitism for some positivists—such as Jan Jeleński. The first steps on this road were taken already in the early seventies. The Jews are harmful since their jobs, namely trade and finance, are “unproductive,” writes one of the journalists in a tone completely opposite to the whole of liberal tradition, which from the times of Nax and Surowiecki emphasized the great significance of these very fields for economic development. As a good example he gives the municipal authority of Kiev—they limited the number of Jews, who could immigrate to the town. “Jews are one of the reasons for the ruin of our cities [...]. This part of population, excluding itself and infected with thousands of superstitions [...] will always be opposed to every higher economic and social order as long as it does not shake off its specificity.”⁵⁰ These last remarks, thrown incidentally in an article relating to fire safety, show a phenomenon that could be observed

earlier, amongst others, in the well-known text of Staszic from the *Pamiętnik Warszawski*: an almost imperceptible transformation of progressive principles into anti-Jewish bias.

In order to compare the attitudes of the radical and moderate positivists towards the Jewish question, it is easiest to look at Bolesław Prus as a representative of the latter. Prus believed that radical positivists often limit themselves to ranting when they proclaim slogans such as the “emancipation of women” or the “equality of rights for Jews.” He supposed that the content of these ideas would be accepted more easily when they are not burdened with ideological labels. So, not passing any opportunity to mock the slogan of the emancipation of women, he presented a program in this field that was very close to that of the *Przegląd Tygodniowy*. In the Jewish question he avoided the principal declarations too, although his constantly stressed moderation could, at least in the seventies, serve as a guise for optimism not smaller than that of the radical positivists.

Prus criticized the very expression “Jewish question,” seeing it only as an element of the wider problem of backwardness. For him, as for the radical positivists, the principal aim was the merging and melting of both communities into one. This target, however, was to be reached, so to say, automatically, through the modernization of society and economics on Polish territories. “Ignorance and caste system lay at the foundation not only of Jewish separatism [...] the peasants who lose money in the inns and fairs are as ignorant as the gentlemen who are bored in the theaters,” whilst the “Jewish tendency to built a separate caste” is not worse from the analogous tendency of the nobility or the bureaucracy. All these tendencies towards separatism will collapse some day “under the pressure of education and progressive ideas.”⁵¹ Prus considered all forms of scoffing particularly harmful—especially because they are aimed against the Jews who speak bad Polish and so against those who are aiming to adopt certain elements of the Polish culture.

In the remaining partitions, the liberals in principle also acknowledged the necessity of the assimilation of the Jews, but often—maybe more often than in Warsaw—they expressed criticism against the Jews who nursed their separateness. In the Prussian Partition most of the Jews assimilated into the German nationality which exposed them to a conflict with the Polish society. This conflict was more and more sharp due to the growing role of the conservatives in the political life of the Poznań region.

In the liberal circles of Galicia one of those concerned with the Jewish question was Teofil Merunowicz who demanded the state control over the

Jewish educational institutions in order to make them similar to “Christian” schools. The person who most univocally supported the assimilation of Jews and opposed any form of discrimination was Jan Lam. His defence of the Jews was tied up strictly with his anti-clerical attitude: in Lam’s eyes, as in many of the contemporary liberals, clericalism, organically joined with conservatism, was the main source of all anti-Jewish manifestations. Once the Felician nuns are given a girls’ school in Żółkiew, “this will repel [...] Jews from sending their daughters there. This is even better,” says Lam ironically, “the Jews and Jewesses will gabble in Hebrew as it has been up until now—Poland is a Catholic country and non-Catholics under punishment of burning at stake, should not be allowed to speak Polish, otherwise who would tell them apart from the Poles?”⁵²

The hesitations of the *Przegląd Tygodniowy* regarding the Jewish problem show a certain characteristics of the radical positivists. So much did they expect quick changes in the near future, so enormously did they believe in the power of learning and rational argument, that when the changes did not happen, it was easier for them than for the moderates to fall into despair. In this way, the traditional liberal optimistic internationalism was disappearing when the *Przegląd* was writing about Polish–German relationship. “The loud and angry German voice” disturbed the centuries old peaceful life of the Slavs. “Neither the Germans nor the Slavs are guilty today of this battle, but fight they must.”⁵³ Such a fatalistic approach to the national conflict is fundamentally different from the moderate approach of Orzeszkowa, Prus or Spasowicz.

The moderates also did not back away from fighting for their ideals and accepted the Darwinian slogan “The struggle for existence,” although they interpreted it in their own way. In the “struggle for existence,” what decides is not “physical strength, the wild law of the iron fist” because then all noble minds would rightly turn away from it with disgust, wrote Eliza Orzeszkowa in 1873. The struggle for existence “in its moral sense” is a fight “between knowledge and ignorance, progress and stagnation, idleness and work.” In spite of the fact that “still today” what often decides is “the strength and the number of fists,” however, “without prejudice [...] considering this matter, it is impossible not to see that the concept of justice [...] if not in practice, then in theory, has been widely developed by excellent minds,” and it became the ideal “of at least relatively educated part of the population.”⁵⁴ It is therefore a fight where the opponent is nature and not another person, so that everyone benefits from it. This is the typical liberal understanding of social Darwinism that prevailed also in the other parti-

tions. "The fight lies in human nature, but its sole aim should be the control of material world and using it to our own needs."⁵⁵ So succinctly was the matter expressed by a Galician journalist.

The victory in this fight will by itself solve both the Jewish question and other social problems. There existed for instance a problem of the influx of Germans into the Kingdom. Bolesław Prus explained: the factory owners willingly employ Germans because the latter, being better qualified than the Poles, do their work better. It is necessary therefore "only" to be more productive than the Germans and their competition will stop threatening us. In the meantime, however, the German colonists are "to a certain degree necessary" here because they contribute to the development of "factories, crafts, companies," that is to rise in national wealth. Bolesław Prus often emphasized the good sides of the Polish-German neighborhood and reminded about the contribution of the Polonized Germans. "To no nation in the world (with the exception of the English for which I have a weakness) have I ever felt disgust or unjust sympathy,"⁵⁶ he wrote. He was indignant to the instances of chauvinism such as, e.g., the call during a flood in Silesia to collect money only for the Polish victims. If the moderate positivists hoped to avoid a struggle for life or death in the national or religious sphere, this hope did not stem from indecision or the fear of an encounter. It was rather a logical consequence of the conviction that in the Polish situation all the divisions—class, religious or ethnic—make it difficult to create a modern, integrated society. This view has nothing at all in common with conservative solidarism (which the positivists were often accused of by the socialists). The opposite is true: it results from the fear that distance between social groups holds back modernization and that it is a new form of the "feudal exclusivity" deplored by Staszic some decades earlier.

Such a view could lead to national intolerance that can clearly be seen in the attitude of many Galician liberals to the Ukrainian question. Jan Lam was a relentless opponent of the Ukrainian national movement considered by him just a reactionary intrigue. He was roused with indignation at the mere thought of some unrealistic "agreement with Ruthenia" which was occasionally mentioned on the three hundredth anniversary of the Polish-Lithuanian Union of Lublin. Of course he condemned the concept of dividing Galicia into two provinces, considering Lwów as more important for Polishness even than Cracow.⁵⁷ In the 1860s and 1870s the Ukrainian question still remains dormant, only in the latter part of the century will it become one of the most important problems of Galician politics.

Bolesław Prus, always very uneasy about the perspective of “caste system” wrote: “If there existed in society one class which despised the other, it would not be such a problem. With the course of time, it would become idiotic, extinct and, as a result of separatism, it would ultimately disappear. Unfortunately, we have lots of classes and lots of contempt; a nobleman slights the clerk, craftsman, shopkeeper, peasant; the clerk of the administrative district despises the craftsman, shopkeeper, peasant, etc. Castes form that avoid marriage between themselves, civilization does not pass quickly enough from higher classes to lower, everyone slowly becomes more stupid, of course not in absolute terms, but in relation to other communities that are less caste-ridden.”⁵⁸ Using terms that were not known to Prus, one can say that the caste system is for him a problem of social communication: it makes difficult not only social mobility but also the circulation of ideas and, as a consequence, the forming of a common language of convictions and ideals, indispensable for maintaining cohesion of a society in the process of modernization.

Prus considered himself to be a person who stood between two camps, and in his polemics he was often more stern towards the radical positivists than towards the conservatives. The distance between him and the “young ones” broadened with time and the mutual antipathy became greater. In 1879 the *Przegląd Tygodniowy* worried that “Mr. Prus with unbridled exaggeration presents the most eminent parties as though they were composed of idiots” and “proposes [...] the establishment of a new party of intelligent and honest people, and he nominates himself as their leader.” Prus should know that “reason and honesty are not a program, but should constitute the property of all public parties—those, however, who refer only to ‘honesty’ and so-called ‘reason’ are usually people without any principles and comprise a passive mass directed by anyone who shouts loud enough.”⁵⁹

This criticism is not—let us admit—completely groundless, but Prus’s reluctance to the very existence of parties does not result from a conservative hostility to the free play of opinions—in the context of his writings there can be no doubts regarding this—but from the fear of dividing society into “castes.” This view therefore has a place in the tradition of Kollataj and Supiński.

It can perhaps appear surprising that Warsaw positivism—so pro-Western, modernizing and enthusiastic about various manifestations of “progress”—judged the development of capitalism so ambiguously: the positivists were its enthusiasts, when it transformed a society frozen in

traditionalism, on the other hand, they reacted very sharply when it did not realize their expectations. On the whole, a distinction was made between the true development of capitalism in the West and its underdevelopment on Polish soil. Sometimes, however, the radicals from *Przegląd Tygodniowy* seem to be disappointed with capitalism as such—and allow themselves to criticize not only native degenerations but also Western ideals. This is one of the instances of an inclination towards disappointment, so often—as mentioned earlier—visible in this periodical.

Special criticism was arisen by the excessive endeavor of individuals to enrich themselves, although the same striving—if it did not exceed the limit—was in the eyes of the positivists worthy of the highest praises. It was easy to acknowledge such financial institutions, as exchanges and banks, as temples of egoism, and consider the wealth accumulated with their help as a speculation not linked with production, therefore not contributing to the rise of the common good and thus not justified. The *Przegląd Tygodniowy* under the impression of a great slump in Vienna in May 1873 described exchanges as “schools of frauds” and the “germs of demoralization.” In the second half of the 19th and the beginning of the twentieth century the criticism of “exchanges” became more and more widespread among both left and right radicals. In the journalism of the 1870s we see the embryonic form of this phenomenon, up till now absent in liberal thought. The “progressive” Warsaw intelligentsia removed from all possibilities of action—apart from journalism—had a natural tendency to intensified criticism. This tendency was not developed in such degree by other Polish intellectual groups that organized themselves in conditions of greater freedom, such as the organic work activists from Poznań, the pre-1863 Warsaw intelligentsia, or the democratic intelligentsia from Galicia contemporary with the positivists. The lack of real possibilities of action favored radical social criticism—this regularity is much more clearly perceived in the history of the Russian intelligentsia.

If the positivists paid so much attention to the development of civilization, it is clear that they considered matters of politics *senso stricto* as secondary. The role of political oppression in shaping the positivists’ program is often overrated. Surely, without censorship they would have been able to criticize the abuses of administration more freely, to demand the democratization of the political system and to manifest some Polish national elements in the cultural life. They would not, however, change their basic socio-philosophical convictions, among which one of the most important was that for human life the seemingly banal everyday concerns are far

more decisive than ceremonial “great events,” seemingly important, and in fact influencing only an external layer of reality.

The education of individuals, preparing them to responsible work for the society, the integration of separate castes into one modern nation and the care for the material civilization rather than for the spiritual culture—all these counted, and not great politics sliding on the surface of events. “The superiority of the political and religious ideals over the economic ones” was one of the main characteristics of “the medieval political system” which, fortunately, broke down in Europe already as the end of the eighteenth century. Now we know that “always [...] and everywhere the economic development showed the way for the development of everything else.”⁶⁰

Of course, the positivists were very anxious about political liberty. Adam Wiślicki writes about the management of private associations: “the surrender of the minorities to the will of the majority is in today’s social state a foundation of success of all common activities. [...] In every economic meeting the opposition, if only it respects legal forms when attacking the majority, not only is not blameworthy, but to the contrary, can be very useful.”⁶¹ Elsewhere the *Przegląd Tygodniowy* (1874 no. 12) complained about the nepotism in private administration and reminded that every private institution should observe its own by-laws while promoting its clerks. It was surely not difficult for readers to transfer these remarks of the need of freedom and legalism from the private institutions into the state. In 1876, the well-known lawyer Antoni Okolski praised in the columns of the *Atheneum* the advantages that come from municipal self-government, discreetly suggesting the need to introduce it also into the Kingdom. In this same monthly in 1883, a series of articles by the well-known financier Jan Bloch about the finances in Russia discussed mismanagement and economic failures of the autocratic Russian governments with openness, rare in the censored Warsaw press.

The political liberty would allow the development of all types of cultural and economic associations thus giving a chance for realization to the idea of organic work. It would create possibilities for economic and educational politics beneficial to the country, but it seems impossible that even full liberty could induce the positivists to move the emphasis from civilizing changes into political life.

If therefore the positivists believed that the political sphere is not a field to decide about the national fate, then we cannot be surprised by their attitude towards various attempts at conciliation with the czarist system.

The positivists were not conciliators, although some of them sometimes gave a prudent support to attempts of political compromise. Włodzimierz Spasowicz was the only one who tried to run conciliatory politics. He disagreed both with the Polish strivings towards independence and with the loyalists advising the Poles to abandon a separate national identity. His dissertations about Polish and Russian literature were guided by the hope that if “the Russian public” got to know Polish culture better, then “it would understand the Polish ideals because of their universal meaning, and having understood, fall in love with them and in this way a large step would be taken on the road to mutual respect and, through it, to the closer relationship of two civilizations divided until now by a Chinese wall of prejudice.”⁶²

Many controversies were awakened by Świętochowski’s essay from 1883 entitled *Wskazania polityczne* (Political Indications) drawing for Polish society a perspective of development within the framework of the Russian Empire without a separate statehood. He did not call for conciliation, but rather (in spite of the title) for ignoring the political sphere and turning to the economy and to the development of civilization. Judging the reality “from the liberal point of view,” Świętochowski writes: “We all know of nations that are completely independent, and yet are half-dead, regressing in development [...]. Because what does each and every one of us wish for? Our own soldiers, battles, victories, conquests, parliaments, delegates, ministers—in one word political apparatus? No, everyone dreams only that he should live happily, according to the laws of his personal and collective nature.”⁶³ The state apparatus is only a cover that gives safety so that if a nation can obtain a guarantee of safe internal development, separate state institutions will not be necessary.

In the whole of nineteenth-century Polish liberal thought these words came probably closest to the classical English liberal doctrine of a minimal state. Soon after Świętochowski’s article, there appeared the work of Herbert Spencer *The Man versus the State* (1884), published in the Polish translation two years later. Did Polish liberalism give up for good its etatist strivings and did it then form its concepts under the influence of English anti-etatist tradition?

It is true: Mill already from the 1860s, later also Darwin and then, from the beginning of the 1880s, Herbert Spencer exerted a great influence on Polish liberal thought. The Warsaw positivists as all the nineteenth-century liberals did not have any doubt that “truth is one everywhere and for everybody,” and the “philosopher from the banks of the Thames can have

pupils and followers on the Vistula.”⁶⁴ At the same time, economic backwardness of the Polish lands made the statements of the Western theorists, meant as descriptions of laws governing a real society, to be taken as normative texts.

For Spencer, the parallel between society and organism was simply a model of the real behavior of society, for the Warsaw positivists, however, it was an unattainable ideal: groups and social classes should adapt their behavior to the demands of the theory. In this way, the texts written in England as scientific analyses were transformed in Poland into reform programs. This sort of reception of English authors can also explain why the positivists so often appealed for building a “normal” society. “Normal”—means industrial, democratic, rich, lay and developing “organically,” i.e., in such way that the development of any specific group would not make it difficult for other groups to develop. This idealized picture of Western societies—above all of England, to a smaller degree France and Germany—was “normality,” the yardstick with which the poor and backward Polish society was compared.⁶⁵

Herbert Spencer was a consistent anti-etatist in the time when English liberalism (from the 1860s) evolved towards acceptance of social activities of the state. The Polish positivists’ dislike of the state—considered alien and hostile—came from completely different motives, however, than the reluctance felt by the English thinker towards the excessive competence of his own state. Warsaw positivists drafted a very wide program of social changes and there is no doubt that they would have accepted with pleasure the cooperation of the state in the realization of this program if only such a possibility had appeared. This may perhaps sound paradoxical, but the lack of political liberty and the resulting lack of a chance for a practical cooperation with the authorities made the Warsaw positivism appear closest to the classical English liberalism from all the contemporary liberal movements in East-Central Europe. This resemblance resulting from the different premises was, however, somewhat superficial and it was to disappear immediately when the political situation changed after 1905.

Warsaw positivists read Spencer selectively skipping some of the threads. An important element of the thought of the English sociologist was a conviction that human activity is always accompanied by unwanted side effects and the interference in the social organism will have consequences in various distant spheres of life. Thus, for example, “in Austria, improvident marriages being prohibited, there come more numerous illegitimate children,” and the establishment of hospitals for foundlings resulted in “an

increase of infants abandoned.” Charitable institutions which were created for the relief of the poor, imperceptibly tend to become independent and begin to serve the particular interests of their activists—in a word, the notion that “evils admit of radical cures” is an illusion.⁶⁶

In theory, the positivists agreed with this: after all they spoke of the “organic” development of society. In practice, however, they believed in the possibility of “completely curing” social evils and of radical transformation of society. If they noticed in the works of their master some fragments like the above, they interpreted them as a caution against giving the right to decide to the unprepared people, as a caution against “mob-rule”—and in this way they weakened the fundamental Spencerian disbelief in the possibility of influencing social processes.⁶⁷

The social thought of the Warsaw positivists provides a good example of a tension typical of Polish liberal thought in the era of the partitions: a tension between individualism and collectivism which often turned into an open dislike for the former. Karol Dunin was uncompromising. “Justice, in the same way as law, acts not for the sake of individuals but the whole; without hesitation we sacrifice the individual where the general good demands it [...] if in the name of justice we demand the independence of individuals then [...] we do it only because according to the present concepts freedom left to them suits the general welfare better than strict rules. And even now we would not hesitate to sacrifice thousands of individuals for the general welfare, and if in such cases we tend to doubt the justice of such behavior, then this is only when the benefit of all is problematic.” Is individualism then only a “technical” device, justified in certain circumstances by its usefulness for the majority, and unnecessary in others? Of course not, the idea of progress comes here with help. The world is so well ordered that history unfolds “from community to individualism” —it is the “constant, unchanging law of civilization.”⁶⁸ The problem of the possible conflict of individualism with collectivism therefore disappears.

In this respect, the attitude of Supiński is undoubtedly more interesting. As we saw in the previous chapter, he could not cope with the problem of the mutual relationship of individual freedom, national interest and the progress of mankind; he approached these problems from various sides, he fell into contradictions and did not come to final conclusions. He noticed, however, the actual problem, while the positivists (both radicals and the moderates) only slid over it.

At the same time, the positivists were methodological individualists (like Supiński). They believed that society would be happy and rich when

the greatest number of individuals will be happy and rich. That is why (and not only because of political limitations) they tried to change society by influencing individuals, forming individual habits, convictions and likes.

The individualism of the positivists expressed itself also in their endeavor to grant the individuals the freedom of opinion. Such an attitude in the version of Aleksander Świętochowski had a lot in common with romantic individualism demanding the rights of expression for individuals. "Even if 9 999 999 people took some unanimous resolution, which would oppose only one of my convictions, then not forcing anybody, I would not hesitate to protest against it in my own name"—he wrote in a programmatic article inaugurating the cycle *Liberum Veto* in the weekly *Prawda*.

In the same article, however, Świętochowski draws his right to his own opinion from the fact that this opinion is in agreement with the ideals of progress which sooner or later has to triumph. Is this therefore really an indication of individualism? Probably so, because Świętochowski also defended the right to the free expression of opinions considered by him to be "reactionary." In the text, which can be acknowledged as the most outspoken expression of his liberal views, Świętochowski—one of the most impetuous anticlericals in the Kingdom—came out in defense of the freedom of religious faith endangered in Germany during the *Kulturkampf*. "The most liberal element, if it is ruthless, will become tyrannical. [...] Whether we order the hanging of some people because they pray, or other people because they do not pray—it is all the same. [...] When we want freedom for ourselves, let us not refuse it others. All liberalism loses the ground under its feet the moment it tears it out from under its opponents [...] Today the Prussian government takes and destroys one of the works of Heine [...]. If Prince Bismarck were to be replaced by an opponent of clericalism who would order to burn all ultramontane books, would this be justified even from the viewpoint of the liberal? All convictions possess the same value in relation to its followers." German liberals want "to take freedom away from Catholics in the name of ... freedom [...]. Indeed, those served progress better who not attending Mass and not accepting sacraments voted for Mass and for sacraments."⁶⁹

The individualism of Świętochowski doubtlessly refers to the famous dissertation of John Stuart Mill *On Liberty*, one of the favorite books of the editor of *Prawda*. It was, after all, Mill who was the first amongst the eminent liberals to proclaim that the main threat for the freedom of the individual is the tyranny of public opinion rather than the tyranny of an op-

pressive government—a thesis very close to that of Aleksander Świętochowski.

It is not a particularly original observation that the philosophical thought of the Warsaw positivists was secondary and superficial; their power lay rather in the vision of social transformations. They did not know much even about the tradition of British empiricism, which they so much liked to use as an example. Michał Wiszniewski, one of the precursors of Polish positivism, believed before the 1863 uprising that Anglo-Saxon empiricism not linked with the continental rationalist tradition is in reality shallow and superficial, whereas his contemporary, Dominik Szulc, had only words of condemnation for philosophy other than empirical. Supiński shared Szulc's views and so did the Warsaw positivists later. It is interesting to look at the criticism of radical positivism undertaken from a rationalist point of view by the philosopher Henryk Struve. He accused the positivists of using metaphysical concepts without defining them and referring to the commonsensical meanings of the words not noticing their ambiguities. The positivists "dogmatically trust their senses and empirical investigations,"⁷⁰ not noticing the apriori bases of their own viewpoint—a current of criticism in certain ways close to that which half a century later will be developed by the neopositivists.

This quiet and professional criticism, so different from the tone of the polemics of the "old" and "new" press, remained of course disregarded by the positivists. From the 1880s, however, a much sharper criticism gains in strength in the philosophical field, as well as in the political, social and economic sphere. It was not yet a crisis of positivism—on the contrary, in the fire of polemics it became a more interesting and deeper doctrine than in the 1870s. It had, however, to turn its attention to the problems that it hitherto had not noticed.

Notes

1 Ludwik Powidaj, "Polacy i Indianie," *Dziennik Literacki*, 1864, no. 53 (reprinted with some omissions in *Droga do niepodległości czy program defensywny?* [Warsaw, 1988], 158–163). Cf. also Janina Rosnowska, "Galicyjski manifest pozytywizmu," *Rocznik Historii Czasopiśmiennictwa Polskiego*, 1970, no. 1, 5–15.

2 Zbigniew Fras wrote extensively on this issue, see Fras, "Nurt liberalny wśród demokratów galicyjskich w latach 1848–1882," in *Tradycje liberalne w Polsce*, 121–134; "Towarzystwo Narodowo-Demokratyczne, 1868–1871," in *Ze skarbca kultury*, 46: 138–177; "Klub rezolucjonistów, 1869–1870," *Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis*, no. 1100

- (Historia LXXIV) (Wrocław, 1990), 179–189; *Florian Ziemiałkowski, 1817–1900* (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1991).
- 3 Halina Kozłowska-Sabatowska, *Między konspiracją a pracą organiczną. Młodość Tadeusza Romanowicza* (Cracow, 1986), 132–133; Kozłowska-Sabatowska, *Ideologia pozytywizmu galicyjskiego* (Wrocław, 1978), 113ff.
 - 4 J. Rogosz, “Medal na uczczenie pamięci pomordowanych włościan na Podlasiu, (Luźne kartki—VII).” [A Medal to commemorate the peasants murdered in Podlasie (Loose sheets—VII)], *Tydzień literacki, Artystyczny, Naukowy i Społeczny*, 1874, no. 8, 117.
 - 5 “Kanał Sueski i handel” [Suez Canal and the trade], *Kraj*, 1869, no. 217.
 - 6 Cf. Czepulis-Rastenis, *Ludzie nauki i talentu*, 297–328. (Chapter titled “Wzór osobowy inteligenta polskiego w świetle wspomnień pośmiertnych (1863–1872)” [An ideal of the Polish intellectual according to obituaries, 1863–1872]).
 - 7 Eliza Orzeszkowa, “‘Historii cywilizacji angielskiej’ przez Henryka Tomasza Buckle’a” [On H. T. Buckle’s *History of Civilisation in England*], *Gazeta Polska*, 1866, no. 157, reprinted in: Ryszard Wroczyński, *Pozytywizm warszawski* [Warsaw Positivism] (Warsaw, 1948), 45.
 - 8 “O tolerancji” [On tolerance], *Przegląd Tygodniowy*, 1872, no. 9, 64; W. Niewiadomski, “Palenie ciał zmarłych” [Creamation of corpses], *Przegląd Tygodniowy*, 1874, no. 19, 155–156.
 - 9 “Echa warszawskie” [Echoes from Warsaw], *Przegląd Tygodniowy*, 1873, no. 29, 230. Cf. also “Egoizm i altruizm” [Egoism and altruism], *Przegląd Tygodniowy*, 1872, no. 29, 225–227.
 - 10 A. S. [Świętochowski], “Krzywy liberalizm” [Crooked liberalism], *Prawda*, 1881, no. 7, 74. See also his book *O powstawaniu praw moralnych* [On the origins of moral laws] (Warsaw, 1877), passim.
 - 11 Quoted after: Rev. Józef Majka, *Katolicka nauka społeczna. Studium historyczno-doktrynalne* [Catholic social teaching. Historico-doctrinal study], (Rome, 1986), 204. On some general preconditions of Catholic-liberal relations in Poland cf. Jarosław Gowin, *Kościół po komunizmie* (Cracow–Warsaw: Znak–Fundacja im. Stefana Batorego, 1995), 178–218. For Świętochowski’s inclinations towards deism, especially in later part of his life, see Ewa Warzenica, *Pozytywistyczny “Obóz młodych” wobec tradycji wielkiej polskiej poezji romantycznej* (Warsaw, 1968), 146.
 - 12 “Langrand-Dumonceau”, *Przegląd Katolicki*, 1873, no. 42, 658.
 - 13 Ks. M. N., “Rok przeszły” [The last year], *Przegląd Katolicki*, 1873, no. 1, 2.
 - 14 J. N., “Głos filologa i głos protestanta o nowoczesnej cywilizacji (dokończenie)” [Voice of a philologist and of a protestant on the modern civilization], *Przegląd Katolicki*, 1873, no. 27, 420.
 - 15 “Nie w porę” [Not in a proper moment], *Przegląd Tygodniowy*, 1872, no. 3, 17.
 - 16 Ks. M. N., “Jeszcze próbka krytyki dziennikarskiej” [One more specimen of a journalist critique], *Przegląd Katolicki*, 1872, no. 5, 69.
 - 17 “Echa warszawskie” [Echoes from Warsaw], *Przegląd Tygodniowy*, 1873, no. 32, 251.
 - 18 “Śmiech Przeglądu Tygodniowego” [Laughter of the *Przegląd Tygodniowy*], *Przegląd Katolicki*, 1873, no. 35, 552–553.
 - 19 “Kopronim (z Ludwika Veuillot’a)” [Copronymous (after Louis Veuillot)], *Przegląd Katolicki*, 1873 no. 29, 458–459.
 - 20 “Praca u podstaw—V (Parafia) [Work at foundations—Part V (Parish)], *Przegląd Tygodniowy*, 1873, no. 16, 121.
 - 21 “Lament pozytywistowski” [Positivist lamentations], *Przegląd Katolicki*, 1873, no. 48, 754.
 - 22 “Katechizm rodzinny” [Family catechism], *Przegląd Tygodniowy*, 1873, no. 40, 315.

- 23 Henryk Hoyer, "Krytyczny pogląd na darwinizm" [Critical view of Darwinism], *Ateneum*, 1876, no. 4, 169–177.
- 24 Bolesław Prus, *Kroniki*, ed. Zygmunt Szweykowski, vols. I–XX (Warsaw, 1953–1970). This reference: Prus, *Kroniki*, vol. III, 60. Christian motives in Prus' works are discussed in detail by Stanisław Fita, "Pozytywista ewangeliczny," *Roczniki Humanistyczne*, 1987, 1: 5–45. On the controversies between the positivists and the Church cf. also Andrzej Jaszcuk, *Spór pozytywistów z konserwatystami o przyszłość Polski* (Warsaw, 1986), 176–187.
- 25 Prus, *Kroniki*, vol. II, 369.
- 26 Marcell Mott, *Listy Wojtusia z Zawad de omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis. Felietony z lat 1865–1867* [Letters of Wojtuś z Zawad de omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis. Feuilletons from the years 1865–1867], ed. Z. Grot and T. Nożyński (Warsaw, 1983), 147.
- 27 Quoted after Stanisław Karwowski, "Historia 'Dziennika Poznańskiego'," in *Książka jubileuszowa Dziennika Poznańskiego* (Poznań, 1909), 47.
- 28 Witold Jakóbczyk, *Studia nad dziejami Wielkopolski w XIX wieku (dzieje pracy organicznej)*, vol. II: 1850–1890 (Poznań, 1959), 45–46, 54–57. See also: Adam Galos, "Liberalismus, Nationalbewusstsein und Ultramontanismus im preussischen Teilungsgebiet in den 60er und 70er Jahren des 19. Jahrhunderts," in *Liberale Traditionen*, 115–142.
- 29 A. S. "Błędne koła (I)" [Vicious Circles (I)], *Prawda*, 1881, no. 5, 49–50.
- 30 Dr. S. Bulikowski, *Siostry miłosierdzia w naszych szpitalach* [Sisters of Mercy in our hospitals], (Lwów, 1871). I know this work only through a polemic: "Czy siostry miłosierdzia kwalifikują się do posługi w szpitalach?" (Are the sisters of mercy qualified to serve in hospitals?), *Przegląd Katolicki*, 1873, no. 30, 465–471.
- 31 Cf. Izabela Zaremba-Piekara, "Idee pozytywistyczne 'Kraju' Gumplowicza," *Rocznik Historii Czołpismnictwa Polskiego*, 1970, 1: 30–31.
- 32 Jan Lam, *Wybór Kronik* [Selected Chronicles], ed. Stanisław Frybes (Warsaw, 1954), 397.
- 33 Lam, "Dzisiejsze prądy" [Contemporary currents], *Tydzień Literacki, Artystyczny, Naukowy i Społeczny*, 1874, no. 1, 1; Lam, "Pogadanki—VI." [Discussions, Part VI.], *Tydzień Literacki, Artystyczny, Naukowy i Społeczny*, 1874, no. 8, 126–127.
- 34 "Postęp" [Progress], *Niwa*, 1873, vol. III, no. 26, 25–27.
- 35 "Karczma i oświata ludowa," [The inn and popular education], *Przegląd Tygodniowy*, 1872, no. 10, 73.
- 36 Prus, *Kroniki*, vol. III, 300.
- 37 Untitled correspondence from Prague signed by a "Relator", September 20, 1885, *Kraj*, 1885, no. 40, 10.
- 38 Cf. A. Świętochowski, "Indianie północnej Ameryki" [The Indians of North America], *Ateneum*, 1876, no. 9, 533–547.
- 39 Piotr Chmielowski, "Niemoralność w literaturze" [Immorality in literature], *Przegląd Tygodniowy*, 1872, no. 1, 3–5; no. 2, 10–11.
- 40 Jan Maurycy Kamiński, "O stosunku poezji do życia społecznego" [On the relation of poetry to social life], *Przegląd Tygodniowy*, 1872, no. 10, 75.
- 41 Antoni Pilecki, "Stanowisko poezji wobec pozytywnego kierunku naszej umysłowości" [The situation of poetry respective the positivist direction of our mentality], *Przegląd Tygodniowy*, 1873, no. 34, 266–267 and. 35, 274–275. Cf. also Warzenica, *Pozytywistyczny "Obóz młodych"*, 88–89.
- 42 "Echa zachodnie" [Echoes from the West], *Przegląd Tygodniowy*, 1872, no. 18, 143. Cf. also Warzenica, *Pozytywistyczny "obóz młodych"*, *passim*.
- 43 Cf. Eliza Orzeszkowa, *Kilka słów o kobietach* [Some words on women] (Warsaw, 1893) (1st ed. 1869).

- 44 [T. Romanowicz], "Stowarzyszenie pracy kobiet. Luźne uwagi—V" [The association for women's work. Loose remarks] Part V), *Tydzień Literacki, Artystyczny, Naukowy i Społeczny*, 1874, no. 6, 85. On the opinions of Galician liberals on the women's problem cf. also Żaremba-Piekara, *Idee pozytywistyczne*, 28–29.
- 45 Eliza Orzeszkowa, "O jednej z najpilniejszych potrzeb społeczeństwa naszego (ciąg dalszy)" [On one of the most pressing needs of our society—continuation], *Niwa*, 1873, vol. III, no. 25.
- 46 "Echa warszawskie" [Echoes from Warsaw], *Przegląd Tygodniowy*, 1872, no. 8, 59.
- 47 "Czego chcemy i dokąd dążymy" [What do we want and where do we go], *Izraelita*, 1872, no. 1, 2; Cf. also Alina Cała, *Asymilacja Żydów w Królestwie Polskim* (Warsaw, 1989), 49–86.
- 48 Quoted after: Prus, *Kroniki*, vol. IV, 498 (Zygmunt Szweykowski's commentary).
- 49 "Echa warszawskie" [Echoes from Warsaw], *Przegląd Tygodniowy*, 1873, no. 1, 5–6.
- 50 "Pożary i środki im zapobieżenia" [Fires and remedies against them], *Przegląd Tygodniowy*, 1874, no. 30, 245.
- 51 Prus, *Kroniki*, vol. III, 80.
- 52 Lam, *Wybór Kronik*, 161–162. The opinions of Galician liberals on the Jewish question are discussed by Halina Kozłowska-Sabatowska, see her *Ideologia pozytywizmu*, 163ff.
- 53 "Na straży" [On guard], *Przegląd Tygodniowy*, 1873, no. 2, 9.
- 54 Orzeszkowa, "O jednej z najpilniejszych potrzeb społeczeństwa naszego," *Niwa*, 1873, vol. III, no. 25, 4.
- 55 J. B. R., *Przemysł galicyjski i jego potrzeby—II* [Galician Industry and its needs—Part II], *Gazeta Narodowa*, 1868, no. 10, 2.
- 56 Bolesław Prus, "Kronika miesięczna" [Monthly Chronicle], *Ateneum*, 1876, no. 6, 635; Prus, *Kroniki*, vol. IV, 219.
- 57 Cf. Jan Lam, *Kroniki lwowskie umieszczone w Gazecie Narodowej w 1868 i 1869* [The Lwów Chronicles, printed in *Gazeta Narodowa* in 1868 and 1869], ed. Józef Rogosz, (Lwów, 1874), 65–66 (and other chronicles published in this volume).
- 58 Prus, *Kroniki*, vol. III, 88.
- 59 Quoted after: Prus, *Kroniki*, vol. IV, 483–484 (Zygmunt Szweykowski's commentary)
- 60 Karol Dunin, "Rozszczepienie pracy—I" [Division of labour—part I], *Prawda*, 1881, no. 1, 4–5. The attitude of the positivists towards politics is discussed in an interesting way by Józef Bachórz in his introduction to Prus' novel *Lalka* [the Doll], Edition of the "Biblioteka Narodowa" series, vol. I (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1991), lxxvi–lxxx.
- 61 A. Wiślicki, "Znaczenie opozycji w zarządzie stowarzyszeń prywatnych," *Przegląd Tygodniowy*, 1870, no. 5, 33.
- 62 Włodzimierz Spasowicz, *Pisma krytycznoliterackie* [Works of literary criticism], ed. Janina Kulczycka-Saloni, (Warsaw, 1981), 87. Cf. also Maciej Jankowski, *Być liberałem w czasie trudnym. Rzecz o Włodzimierzu Spasowiczu* (Łódź, 1996), chapters V and VI; as well as Andrzej Szware, "Czy pozytywści warszawscy skłaniali się ku polityce ugody?" in *Losy Polaków w XIX–XX wieku* (Warsaw, 1987), 254–268.
- 63 A. Świętochowski, "Wskazania polityczne" [Political directions], in *Ognisko. Księga zbiorowa wydana dla uczczenia dwudziestopięcioletniej pracy T. T. Jeża* [Hearth. Collective volume published in honour of the 25-year-career of T. T. Jeż] (Warsaw, 1882), 51. Similar opinions were presented in the leading article in the first issue of the *Prawda* in 1881, "Myślę więc jestem" [I think, therefore I exist].
- 64 Adolf Dygasiński, "My i nasze sztandary" [We and our standards], *Przegląd Tygodniowy*, 1882, no. 44–48, fragments reprinted in: R. Wroczyński, *Pozytywizm warszawski* [Warsaw Positivism] (Warsaw, 1948), 46–49.
- 65 As an excellent instance of such ideal, one should mention the gorgeous vision of Paris

- as seen by Wokulski in *The Doll*. This vision is analysed by J. Bachórz in his introduction to *The Doll* (cf. footnote 60), as well as by Tomasz Wójcik, "Paryska utopia Bolesława Prusa," *Przegląd Humanistyczny*, 1990, 7: 123–132.
- 66 H. Spencer, *The Study of Sociology* (London, 1874), 3rd edition, 22. The Warsaw positivists could read it in Polish translation: *Wstęp do socjologii* [Introduction to Sociology] (Warsaw, 1884), 21.
- 67 S. W., "Herbert Spencer o urządzeniach politycznych—II" [Herbert Spencer on political institutions—Part II], *Prawda*, 1882, no. 34, 400–402.
- 68 Karol Dunin, *Prawo własności. Rzecz ekonomiczno-prawna dla nieprawników* [Property Rights] (Warsaw, 1879), 25, 113; Dunin, "Indywidualizm w życiu społecznym" [Individualism in Social Life], in *Ognisko*, 81 [see footnote 63].
- 69 Aleksander Świętochowski, *Liberum Veto*, ed. M. Brykalska, S. Sandler (Warsaw, 1976), vol. I, 170–176 (originally published in *Prawda*, 1881, no. 1.); and Świętochowski, "Krzywy liberalizm" [Crooked Liberalism], *Prawda*, 1881, no. 7, 73–74. See also Włodzimierz Bernacki, *Z dziejów polskiego liberalizmu politycznego* (Craców: Wydawnictwo Oddziału Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1994), 43–49.
- 70 Henryk Struve's "[Review of] A. E. Eger, 'Zasady pozytywizmu'," *Ateneum*, 1876, January, 240–252. Fragments of works by Wiśniewski and Szule are included in the volume *700 lat myśli polskiej. Filozofia i myśl społeczna w latach 1831–1864* [700 years of the Polish thought. Philosophy and the social thought in the years 1831–1864], ed. Andrzej Walicki (Warsaw, 1977), 998–1023.

CHAPTER 6

Positivism under Attack

The turn of the 1870s and 1880s on the Polish territories does not mark the beginning of a new era: positivism is still—and will be for a dozen or so years—the dominating formation. Debates, however, intensify, concerning matters decided—it would seem—long ago to the advantage of the liberals. From the 1840s to the beginning of the 1880s, most of the enemies of liberalism had a feeling of being on the defensive. They considered themselves defenders of values great and noble but antiquated, and felt that the battle with liberalism could only mean the delaying of “progress.” Now something changes; the opponents of liberalism more often believe that the future belongs to them, that it is they who represent the emerging and developing power. They do not generally have new arguments; their mental “map of the world” is different than that of the liberals, they proclaim other values, whereas the liberals usually do not understand this, appealing to the axioms of their own *Weltanschauung*, not noticing that the axioms themselves have already been questioned. The most significant of the questioned axioms was the idea of rationalism.

“Liberalism of the nineteenth century, attacks against which have now become customary and fashionable” (such words fell in September 1883 in the monthly *Ateneum*), did not yet doubt its final victory. In the 1880s new magazines appear, which play a very important role in the intellectual life of the end of the century, showing the vitality of the liberal centers. From 1881 there comes out in Warsaw the weekly *Prawda* under the editorship of Aleksander Świętochowski, a year later there appears in St. Petersburg a brilliantly edited weekly *Kraj*, soon attaining the position of the most important organ of moderate positivism. Politically it is the organ of the liberal advocates of conciliation with St. Petersburg—Włodzimierz Spasowicz and Erazm Piltz, though, authors not sharing this orientation published there as well. In Cracow in 1882 there appears the daily newspa-

per *Nowa Reforma* edited by Tadeusz Romanowicz and Tadeusz Rutowski—the Galician democracy, up till now traditionally a Lwów speciality, gains a strong position in Cracow, usually considered a bastion of conservatism.

So in the 1880s the liberals do not generally have cause for concern—in any case no more than in earlier eras. Now as before, they see in the world ever more numerous signs of coming closer to the liberal ideal. Now, however, they more frequently reflect whether the road to the ideal is not longer and more winding than they had previously thought. And above all: whether the ideal itself should not undergo certain modifications.

In 1884 a book appeared in Lwów which caused quite a stir in the Polish press, although later it became completely forgotten: *Listy do przyjaciela* (Letters to a friend) by Ludwik Masłowski. One of the most fervent of the Galician positivists, a translator and propagator of Darwin and materialist German natural historians, started a frontal attack on his hitherto existing convictions and published a conservative creed. A polemicist in *Kraj* accurately noticed that Masłowski was never a liberal *senso stricto*, but rather a radical positivist proclaiming atheism and materialism: his conversion to Catholicism and the abandonment of positivist ideals were not therefore in reality aimed at liberal thought. It did not, however, make much difference, since the author himself aimed at Polish, and especially Galician liberalism, not positivism or materialism, considering these as the organic elements of the liberal viewpoint.

The main thought of the book may be reduced to the question: what does liberalism lead to? The author says clearly: liberalism inevitably leads to all extremes, to socialism, to communism, to anarchism, it brings not so much despotism or the loss of traditional values but something much worse: weakening and subsequent disappearance of social ties, anarchy and the crisis of civilization. There is nothing new in such reproaches, and liberals were trained in responding to them; their importance was determined by the context of their epoch.

From various sides voices began to be raised against the liberals. The old debate with Catholicism still continues: the positivists continually use the same arguments, but the Catholic side is now more confident. The new pontificate of Leo XIII (from 1878) marked for the Catholic Church an attempt at adjusting to the modern world; the Church took a clearer position in social matters and endeavored to regain its influence over the masses. On the Polish territories the new attitude is visible especially in the activities of the Church in Galicia: in the monthly published by the Jesuits *Przegląd Powszechny* (Universal Review), intended for the

intelligentsia, and in the endeavors to form Christian-social political groups.

Modern radicalism of the Right appears beside traditional conservatism. In the Polish Kingdom of the 1880s, its herald is the *Rola* edited by Jan Jeleński, whereas in the 1890s nationalism represented by the National Democracy gains strength in all the partitions.

The ideas of Marxist socialism were gaining strength, too. Marxism, like liberalism, considered itself rational and progressive, and gave its followers a pleasant conviction that the necessity of its ultimate victory is scientifically proven. In the Polish Kingdom the socialist movement began to grow in the late 1870s. Soon, however, it was broken up by arrests, and it did not develop on a greater scale until the formation of the Polish Socialist Party (PPS) in 1892. However, in intellectual life (even in the legal one, cramped by censorship), socialism and Marxism mark their presence even more clearly.

Political changes are linked with social changes; the end of the century marks the establishment of mass society, mass politics and mass culture. Liberalism aimed to embrace the whole of society—contrary to conservatism, it was not a consciously elitist ideology—but it did not intend to lower its standards in this endeavor. The people, educated, “raised up” and “made into citizens” were to accept the views and value system of the intelligentsia. Just as the ideal of the late eighteenth-century reformers was to spread the noble privileges into the whole of society and in this way “ennoble” the nation, so the ideal of the Polish liberals in the second half of the nineteenth century became the raising of the whole nation to the standard of the intelligentsia. Meanwhile the entry of the masses into politics frustrated the expectations of the liberals: representatives of the new social strata sought a place for themselves in the new political parties, instead of grouping under the standard of liberalism. The camp, which throughout the nineteenth century described itself as “progressive,” suddenly noticed with astonishment that against the background of new groupings it is remarkably moderate and even close to conservatism.

Not only the masses brought a disappointment to the liberals. The beginning of the twentieth century witnessed also (at least temporarily) the collapse of the immemorial faith in the virtues of the middle class. For the preceding generations of the 1860s and 1870s, it had still been an unshakeable dogma. The strong middle class was to favor not only the development of liberalism, but also the development of culture—it was to this class that Józef Rogosz in 1874 ascribed all the blossoming of arts in the

history of world, including the development of Polish painting after the 1863 uprising. Meanwhile, reality proved these views false. After all, at the end of the century this middle class, long awaited by the liberals, already existed—at least in an embryonic stage. Polish townspeople and craftsmen, already had their own political organizations in Galicia and the Poznań region. The Galician liberal democrats of the 1860s and 1870s dedicated most of their activity to the political awakening of the townspeople. The Lwów democratic organization of craftsmen, under the name of *Gwiazda* (Star), gave rise to similar “Stars” in other cities of Galicia. The patriotic sport organization, *Sokół* (Falcon), was also the work of the liberals. It was modeled on a similar Czech organization which, in turn, imitated the German gymnastics society (*Turnverein*). In the Poznań region the organic work activists, supported by part of the gentry, paid more attention to the problems of the countryside than their Galician colleagues did, but they did not neglect the towns either. These activities brought real effects as regards the growth of culture and political activity among the town population, but it was not the liberals who benefited from it.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the townspeople—in the whole of East-Central Europe— became the base for nationalist movements. Institutions founded by liberals were taken over by nationalist parties—this happened in Galicia with the *Gwiazdas*, and later with the *Sokół*. In the Poznań region, the harbinger of urban nationalism became the weekly *Orędownik* (The Spokesman) published by Roman Szymański, while the *Dziennik Poznański* remained the newspaper of the intelligentsia. The middle class turned away from the liberals.

Lwów, traditionally the stronghold of the Galician democracy, with strong and nationally conscious townspeople, was being gradually taken over by the nationalists through the second half of the nineteenth century. Liberal democracy retained certain influences in the western part of the province, amongst the intelligentsia of Cracow and several smaller towns. In the Polish Kingdom liberalism never found a way to the townspeople (attempts in this direction carried out before the 1863 uprising could not be continued later) and in the decades after 1860s it was the typical ideology of the intelligentsia. Now, however, at the end of the century, the Galician and Poznań liberalism has met the same fate: the intelligentsia remained the only stratum they could approach with some chances of success. But liberal influence on them was not certain either.

Both of the new radicalisms, socialist and nationalist, to a certain extent derived from liberalism. In the 1880s and 1890s the liberal ideal of moder-

ate progress was less and less sufficient for the radical intelligentsia. The transition was gradual. Świętochowski published in the *Prawda* texts of many authors far from liberal thought, such as the outstanding sociologist Ludwik Krzywicki. The authors from *Prawda* including Świętochowski himself could be found in the weekly *Głos* (Voice) published from 1887 in Warsaw by Józef Potocki (Marian Bohusz) and Jan Popławski—and even the profile of the *Głos* was different. This was a magazine of the intelligentsia “looking for their way,” still unsure of their own views, but reluctant to liberal moderateness, seen as inconsistent and shaky. The journalists of *Głos* gave an extremely critical judgement of St. Petersburg’s *Kraj*; they critically judged the excessive moderation of the Galician democracy, too. For them, the people was no longer an object of paternalist care and civilizing work, but the creator of a separate culture, worthy of recognition. The elements of the attitude, which will soon induce part of the intelligentsia to support the emerging peasant movement, are clearly visible here.

In the present book I have many times paid attention to the centralizing and integrating endeavors of the liberals, fighting with the estate division of society—with the relics of feudalism. This liberal centralism could promote the rapprochement of some liberals with nationalism. The attitude of numerous Galician democrats towards the Ukrainian question in 1848 provides a good example of such rapprochement. This attitude was subjected to a certain change in the 1880s and 1890s when the Galician democracy was inclined to treat the Ukrainian national movement as an ally in the struggle against the ruling conservatives. Not without influence was the shift of the center of the democratic movement to Cracow (because of the establishment of the *Nowa Reforma* (New Reform)). From a distance, it was easier to judge the Polish–Ukrainian relationships more justly than in multinational Lwów. For the Cracow democracy the Ukrainian national movement was also a desirable anti-Russian ally—so long as it renounced its pro-Muscovite sympathy.

Anti-Ukrainian attitudes among the Galician democrats did not disappear. “There are no persecutions of the Ruthenes here. The legend about the sorely oppressed Ruthenian nationality in Galicia belongs to the type of fairy-tale about sea serpents.” Both the Ukrainian nationalists and the pro-Muscovite Old Ruthenian Party united against the Poles, and under the “disguise of teaching the people, they instil the venom of national, religious and social hatred,” wrote a Lwów correspondent in *Prawda* in 1881 (No. 11).

Opposing as a matter of principle the views of the National Democrats

and especially their concept of “national egoism,” the liberals accepted, however not fully consciously, some elements of the new vision of the world, which presented national conflicts as the main subject of history. Not to contradict the never rejected axiom about the complementary character of human interests, this view was generally expressed in a less aggressive way than among the National Democrats. At the same time, the view of the nation state as the natural political form, as opposed to the anachronistic multinational state, was becoming more and more widespread. In the eyes of Aleksander Świętochowski, the Habsburg Monarchy in 1903 constituted “the embodiment of political nonsense, a state like a barrel knocked together with rotten hoops in which every stave originates from a different tree trunk and none of them fits the others.”¹ The ideal of self-determination of nations existed in European thought roughly from the 1848 revolutions, up till now, however, it generally indicated that multinational states must be ordered in such a way as to give equal rights to all the nationalities. In the early twentieth century the thought of a monoethnic state gained more and more popularity, although until the First World War it would not gain unquestioned superiority in Polish political thinking.

There existed of course a considerable difference between the positivist and the nationalist concept of nation: whilst for nationalists the nation is superior to the individuals of which it consists, for positivists, in principle, there is no difference between a nation and a society.² Nation is for them a collection composed of individuals and subject to all sociological laws discovered by Spencer and other theorists of positivist social sciences. The nationalists justified national ties by emotional needs, and sometimes elevated these ties into a mystical category not subjected to rational cognition, while for positivists the national bond had a rational justification and served the good of the separate individuals forming the nation. Even those liberals, who would accept some concepts from the nationalist arsenal on the eve of the First World War, never would get used to the exalted way of speaking about the nation and its problems.

The very element of positivist thought, which favored a certain rapprochement to nationalism—namely the endeavor to integrate society—originally caused a certain reluctance towards socialism. For the positivists the principal social problem in Poland was—let us remember—the excessive distance between classes, stiff (“caste”) divisions hindering social mobility and making the flow of ideas between each stratum of society difficult. From this perspective the idea of a class struggle formed the same hindrance to modernization, as the privileges of the nobility and the Jewish

separateness. The socialists stressed the separateness of one stratum in relation to the others, and so, in the eyes of the positivists, they brought back to life elements of a former estate system.

The best known positivist criticism of socialism, carried out in 1881 by Władysław Wścieklica, took a similar direction. He attempted to prove that Polish socialists, in spite of the teaching of Marx, try to “jump over” the stage of capitalism, fighting for socialism in a country in which the basic task is the destruction of the continually ruling feudalism. Since Polish socialism was opposed to the building of a modern capitalist society, then—despite the intentions of the socialists themselves—it was a power restricting development.³

The lawyer Karol Dunin, a graduate of the Main School, seriously and fundamentally attacked the basic principles of socialism. The development of mankind is running in a direction of even greater individualism (the author has learnt this from Spencer); accordingly, the progress brings victory to the individual property, thus the socialist collectivism is in fact anti-progressive. Great private property—Dunin repeats the well-known arguments of Western economics—is innovative because it can afford the risk of testing out new methods of organization and technology of work. Socialists ignore the inborn egoism of human nature, whose fruit is free competition—the main factor of the development of societies. Dunin only marginally mentions the danger for political freedom—the uncontrolled growth of socialist bureaucracy.⁴ Other trend of criticism which was to gain popularity during the revolution of 1905 warned against the destructive power of socialist movements that attract individuals alienated from society, with an inclination to physical force and even to banditry.

In spite of all this, the attitude of the positivists towards socialism slowly succumbed to change. Both trends originated, after all, from the same tradition of rationalism and Enlightenment. A new generation of the intelligentsia appeared in Warsaw in the 1880s, accepting positivist ideas of rationalism and secularism, but more radical socially, rejecting the idea of spontaneous capitalist development. Aleksander Świętochowski played the role of a link between the two generations. It was he, after all, who always emphasized the role of the individual in a way which had more in common with romantic individualism than with liberalism; he did not share the quiet optimism of Prus and Orzeszkowa, and wavered between enthusiasm and despair. He also included the idea of reformed morality into his program—which other Polish liberals avoided—having for years criticized the “shallow and banal” ideals of the middle class, he was especially suited as a

mentor of the new generation of intelligentsia, although he never accepted socialism himself.

One of the decisive moments of the rapprochement of the socialists and the liberals was the antipositivist turn in European culture. When the traditions of enlightened rationalism came under an ever-increasing line of fire, then suddenly the unity of the roots of socialist and liberal thought became more important than the deep differences in almost all practical matters. The ground for rapprochement was prepared by the evolution of both socialist and liberal thought that was visible already for some time.

It is well known that European socialism became more and more a “tamed” ideology; it pushed social revolution increasingly further away, taking into account the necessity for slow changes, which only in the distant future can bear the fruit of the victory of a new political system. The culmination of this way of thinking was the revisionism of Eduard Bernstein. A non-socialist economic theory was evolving side by side. The crowning of liberal economics was the neoclassical school: developing independently in Great Britain (Alfred Marshall) and in Austria (Eugen Böhm-Bawerk), it worked out a coherent and detailed theory of economy coming out of individualistic assumptions. Its foundation was the research into the mechanism of the individuals’ economic choice. In Great Britain neoclassical economic thought was to survive until the Keynesian revolution of the 1930s, but on the continent it never gained an exclusive position. Its position was especially weak in Germany where academic economics tended to absorb certain socialist threads. The result was the so-called *Kathedersozialismus*, an ideology proclaimed mostly by professors of universities (hence its name), demanding the state regulation of economic relations and legislative activities in order to limit poverty. The reception of this ideology was facilitated by the strong traditions of conservative paternalism, easy to reconcile with economic interventionism; this can explain the support of Bismarck for active social politics.

The monthly *Ateneum* already in 1883 exhaustively informed about the new direction. “For a long time, for a very long time, European liberalism claimed categorically that society does not need any link with the state,” other than armed force for the suppression of riots. “Today, however, [...] voices are more strongly heard [...] demanding legislative intervention and the vigorous action of state authorities in the economic interests of the nation.” In fact “the principle of free competition [...] was and still remained one of most effective stimuli to the development of economic and

intellectual powers,” nevertheless “its abuse must be restrained, not damaging it itself.” The same article referred to the views of Friedrich List and Wilhelm Roscher—German economists expressing skepticism towards the unrestricted economic freedom already in the middle of the century.⁵

New ideas found an expression in the economic thought of Galician democrats: from the beginning of the 1880s Tadeusz Rutowski, and later Stanisław Szczepanowski even more loudly demanded the development of industry, and referring to the Austrian cameralistic traditions, they credited the state authorities with the main role in initiating industrial development. The book of Rutowski *W sprawie przemysłu krajowego* (On the national industry, 1883) was the groundwork for one of the most excellent works of Polish liberal journalism—*Nędza Galicji w cyfrach* (Galician poverty in figures, 1888) by Stanisław Szczepanowski. Its author, born in Greater Poland and living for many years in England, took the ambitious aim to foster the modernization of the Polish territories and above all of Galicia, where he settled after returning from Great Britain. His most famous book shows a coherent model of a backward country where the poverty of the townspeople, peasants and Jews is mutually conditioned, forming a socio-economic system mired in stagnation. The cure for this can be active interventionist industrial policy.

A change in economic views went hand in hand with a change in social sensitivity. People slowly ceased to believe that individual philanthropy and economic progress would solve the problem of pauperism: it became more generally believed that the fight with poverty is one of the duties of the state.

Not all liberal circles surrendered to the pressure of new ideas in equal measure. The St. Petersburg *Kraj* remained completely free of nationalist influences—and paid for it with its collapse at the beginning of the twentieth century. Criticizing in the columns of this magazine the ultra-patriotic work of Wilhelm Feldman, Włodzimierz Spasowicz expressed his anxiety that “in our century, amongst the savagery of nationalism,” literature forgets about the necessity of “not leaving for a moment the point of view of the scientific humanitarian knowledge and of universal, humanitarian socialization.”⁶ An indication of the resistance of the *Kraj* group against new ideas was the books of one of the editors of the magazine, Erazm Piltz, entitled *Nasza młodzież* (Our youth) and *Nasze stronnictwa skrajne* (Our Extreme Parties). These “extreme parties” appealing to the masses, playing on passions and threatening with destruction of all the effects of organic work that had been developing for many years, are the National Democrats

and the socialists. Interestingly enough, Piltz acknowledged the former as his chief enemy. There is a tactical element in this—nationalism linked with the insurgent ideology proclaimed at the time by the National Democratic Party seemed surely more dangerous for the conciliatory politics than the socialist movement which did not see the national question as a high priority. I believe, however, that more important were the matters of principle: the universalism of the socialists, although dangerous for social order, could seem to the liberals more attractive than the “national egoism” of the National Democratic Party.

It is worth looking more closely at the attitude of the liberals in the Jewish question. Jan Jeleński, a former positivist and collaborator of the *Przegląd Tygodniowy*, published the book *Żydzi, Niemcy i my* (Jews, Germans and Us) in 1878, which in the course of three years had four editions. The attitude of Jeleński is no longer traditional, religion-motivated anti-Judaism. His book contains aggressive phraseology typical of twentieth-century anti-Semitism, and Jeleński's description of solidarity, supposedly shown by Jews in harassing Christians, at moments takes on the features of a demonic conspiracy. At the same time, the reader notices with surprise that this anti-Semitic demagogy is linked with a concrete program in the Jewish question, close to the concepts of Świętochowski or even Orzeszkowa. This program can be reduced to the preaching of maximum integration of Jews and Poles, and to the appeal for awakening amongst the Poles of an entrepreneurial spirit and of “prosaic” interests in economic matters. Jeleński criticizes Polish economic “clumsiness” with almost the same words that Stanisław Szczepanowski will use a few years later. Writing about the harmfulness of Jews he does not fail to add that an analogically harmful class is the Polish aristocracy, which does not fulfil its social duties.⁷ Every positivist could subscribe to a similar program.

Such an attitude differentiates Jeleński's program of 1878 from the ideas of modern anti-Semitism. For Jeleński, similarly as for the liberals, the enemy is the non-assimilated Jew, nurturing his own separateness, while for the modern anti-Semite the most dangerous will be the assimilated Jew who hides his fundamental and unchangeable alienness under his apparent acceptance of the culture of his country of residence. The contemporary views of Jeleński mark an interesting stage of development when the general orientation remains liberal, but the phraseology and presentation of the Jew as an enemy already heralds modern anti-Semitism. They also announce a certain possible direction of the evolution of liberal thought, namely its meeting with anti-Semitism and the gradual renounce-

ing of former ideals. Some liberals would follow this trail from the beginning of the twentieth century; in Galicia the thought of Józef Rogosz and Teofil Merunowicz evolves in this direction.

Liberal journalism—both Prus and Świętochowski—criticized Jeleński. In the 1880s, however, liberal belief in the assimilation was put to a hard test. The December pogrom in 1881 can be acknowledged as the symbolical beginning of the new period in the Polish Kingdom. During the Christmas Mass in the church of the Holy Cross in Warsaw there was an outbreak of panic caused by the rumor of an imaginary fire; twenty people were trampled to death in the crowd. Next there was gossip that the Jews had induced panic in the church, and the effect was a pogrom of Jewish dwellings and shops. The pogrom affected ten thousand people, of whom almost a thousand lost all their property and there were two fatalities.⁸

The liberals could not interpret a similar event in any other way than as the survival of old superstition. Most of the Warsaw press found an easy solution throwing the blame on rascals and discreetly indicating the inactivity of the authorities as a factor aggravating the incident. Świętochowski undertook an attempt at a serious interpretation. Let us not delude ourselves, he says. “Instead of lying and restricting the circles of participants of the riots to “small bands” [...] it is better to reconcile ourselves with the thought that fire embraced wide circles of the Christian population.” “The December events can be repeated at any moment in which our vigilance falls asleep and hatred awakens,” and the reason is that on Polish soil “there live next to each other two completely different and hostile types of population.”

“The situation would be changed for the better if only the Jews would abandon their specific dress that separates them from the rest of population,” Świętochowski repeats the old postulate of the positivists, and at the same time develops his own theory of anti-Semitism.” According to a conviction of the Christian people, a Jew is a creature clad in a long cloak [...]. If anyone from the educated Israelites were to go to a Polish village [...] none of the peasants would suspect him of being a follower of Moses.” Świętochowski knows that anti-Jewish feelings appear in higher classes as well and are directed against individuals who are fully assimilated, he does not, however, believe that this negates his theory. “The notion of a Jew consists primarily of impressions received from observing this mass, which with its lifestyle and exterior appearance cuts itself sharply off from Christian society. In every educated, polished and refined Jew the Christian hates the whole tribe of Israel. If today Jews, together with all their sepa-

rateness were to disappear, tomorrow the anti-Semitic movement would be reduced to the sounds of ultramontane nobles' guns firing in the air."

If separateness is the main reason for the conflicts, then Świątochowski's program is not surprising: We should "stand before the governmental authority and say: we beg for an obligatory education and the assimilation of Jews to the population amongst which they live: we ask for the legislative annulment of all Israeli institutions which keep up the division; [...] we ask for Draconian laws against the present separatism. Who is to ask for this? The enlightened Israelites."⁹ This last statement somewhat weakens the strength of the reasoning, nevertheless the perspective of a future anti-Semitic evolution is visible. Now it will be enough to state that the enlightened Israelites do not fulfil the civilizing task and the reluctance will turn against all Jews, "refined" and not refined without distinction.

Something else is even more important. This text, as few others, shows certain organic features of the liberal ideology, appearing in Świątochowski unusually strongly. What I mean is a profound lack of sympathy for any cultural differences. To a large extent this is the aspect of the often mentioned problem: the separateness of the Jewish culture, of peasants or of ethnic minorities appeared to the liberals as varieties of this nightmare of "exclusion" or "caste system" which comprised the most horrendous heritage of the "feudal" era. In human attachment for "antiquated shapes," rationalists and admirers of the Enlightenment saw only relics of backwardness and a hindrance for progress.

Świątochowski could not conceal his surprise that "the most stupid and most common folk-song, which even in comparison to the degree of development and ability of its creators is an infirm produce, is carefully collected from the lips of the peasants, written down in all the most insignificant variants and held up as a jewel in the treasury of national poetry." The whole enthusiasm for the folk culture of the Tatra Mountains, displayed by the Polish fashionable society, is worthy of laughter; works of art historians investigating peasant cottages around Zakopane in the Tatra are a similar waste of time as the attempts to create a "Zakopane-style" in architecture. "Highlanders' buildings are fossilized immaturities, or the beginning of culture which cannot yet have a pretension to art. [...] Crude oat cake baked by the Zakopane peasants can satiate hunger, nevertheless it is a very primitive and tasteless cake, and it does not present a separate and charming style." For Świątochowski, aesthetics, as everything else, develops in a straight line, therefore the "primitive" folk works simply have to be uglier than the works of our era.¹⁰

When Świętochowski treated the merits of folk art so contemptuously, Prus was admiring the works of the well-known ethnographer Oskar Kolberg. Their main value he saw, however, not in the aesthetic sphere, but in the fact that Kolberg, carefully assembling specimens of folk poetry, “linked yet another thread between the intelligentsia and the people,”¹¹ and so contributed to the realization of the positivist program of constructing a uniform and integrated nation. The phenomenon, noted in the previous chapter, can be seen once again: from the same general assumption (in this case the striving for unity and integration of society) a radical positivist and a moderate positivist can draw completely opposing conclusions in a given specific question.

Positivists often appealed for a greater interest in Jewish problems, attributing most of the responsibility for the conflicts between the two denominations to ignorance; probably the only person who took this appeal seriously was Eliza Orzeszkowa, dedicating her thorough work *O Żydach i kwestii żydowskiej* (On Jews and the Jewish Question, 1882) to this subject. Related matters, such as the tension and harmony between local and universal, between universal progress and the nationality of culture are the main subject of the next work of Orzeszkowa *Patriotyzm i kosmopolityzm* (Patriotism and cosmopolitanism, 1888).¹² Here the polemics develop simultaneously with the opponents of Western civilization (an old motif in the writings of the positivists, including Orzeszkowa), and with the unidentified “cosmopolitans.” Most probably this was a camouflaged polemics with socialism, but the author’s reflections cannot be limited only to it. She was an optimist, one can say a heroic optimist who understood the tragic situation of the Poles in the era of the sharpest Russification, but believed that “reason” and “learning” must lead the world to a better future. This optimism and rationalism dictate her position in the Jewish question: “If we lived in blessed times, in which every social entanglement would be cut through by a sword and burned out by fire, we would have a tendency to treat the Jews as the Spaniards treated the Moors, we would want to burn half of them and throw the other half out of the country.” Unfortunately, for advocates of similar solutions “burning, throwing out, any extermination now belongs to old rubbish incinerated in the cleansing fire of civilization.”¹³ Anti-Jewish prejudices are unable to oppose the verdict of science which teaches to see Jews in comparison with other nations, as their virtues and vices can only be assessed in this way. For Orzeszkowa a paragon of a social scientist is Herbert Spencer. Discussing the frauds and abuse of English merchants, he does not write that the English deceive—“a sociologist

does not reason in this way"¹⁴—but proves that all people “in the same circumstances” would behave similarly. The situation of the Polish Jews should be examined analogously. “If in industry and trade the number of Christians and Jews were equal, we would say: dishonest traders, since, however, it is different, we say: dishonest Jews.”¹⁵ Similarly with the accusation of being *nouveau riche*: haughtiness and arrogance are the features of every *nouveau riche*, not only Jews. Orzeszkowa stresses that the very fact of their growing rich is an evidence of their attempt to rise from the “lowest place in society” and as such should be evaluated positively.

The Jews are accused that through nurturing their separateness they comprise a “foreign body” and are “harmful” to society.¹⁶ This accusation refers only to non-enlightened Jews and it can refer to other social groups as well, above all to Polish peasants. Jews, similarly to peasants, are a stratum that should become civilized in its own interest and in the interest of the whole society. In the integration of Jews, Orzeszkowa sees a chance for Polish progressive groups, too: the conflict between Jews and “Christians” (the positivists never spoke of a conflict between Jews and Poles) is in essence a conflict between the tradesmen’s mentality and that of the nobleman. “Everywhere, wherever educated Jews exist, they represent an element of progress.” The progressiveness of Jews “can be [...] one more impulse in the meager amount of impulses pushing us up onto the road of development.”¹⁷ The union of Jews with liberalism, a great advantage in the eyes of the positivists, was soon to provide the essential motive of anti-Semitic and at the same time anti-liberal propaganda.

Of all the positivists Orzeszkowa came closest to the acceptance of cultural difference. She did not, of course, renounce the key positivist concept, that of the linear development of human societies. She perceived, however, that this progress can be accomplished in a complex manner and it cannot be stated that “infantile people, handicapped and so-called wild do not play a role proper to themselves in maintaining harmony and equilibrium in the balance of the natural factors of life on earth.”

This acceptance of variability is surely linked with the artistic sensitivity of Orzeszkowa as a writer: “if everything were the same,” she writes, “how immensely boring it would be.”¹⁸ In her story “Mighty Samson” the poor Jewess, hardworking in order to maintain her husband who occupies himself only with Talmudic speculations, not only does not rebel against her fate, but is proud that her husband is such an enlightened and saintly man. It is not difficult to imagine what Świętochowski would have made of such a subject; in Orzeszkowa, however, we have a friendly interest and an at-

tempt at understanding the values of a different world. "Diversity within unity"¹⁹ remained her ideal and a well understood cosmopolitanism meant for her "an acknowledgement of the benefits resulting from the union of endeavors and attempts to a common aim of improving mankind and making it happy."²⁰ In this vision of world patriotism (surely only because of censorship referred to by the author as "localism") creates the completion, not the negation of cosmopolitanism.

And yet Orzeszkowa's program in the Jewish question stresses uniformity. She hoped that at last "the edifice of separateness tolerated through the centuries" would totter,²¹ and the Jews will "enter"²² our organism. One difference she was, however, prepared to fully respect: religion. As every liberal, Orzeszkowa considered religion to be a private affair and did not see any reasons why the follower of the Mosaic religion should not be an emancipated, useful and, what is most important, a modern thinking member of the Polish nation. But religion must be reformed because a simple Jew "does not differentiate [...] the essence of religion from cult, cult from old customs intermingled with it."²³ Religious reforms should be carried out by a specially qualified council of the most outstanding representatives of the Jews, namely the Sanhedrin, on the model of that called up by Napoleon.

Above all, however, it is necessary—in this matter Orzeszkowa does not differ from Jeleński—to make away with Jewish religious schools, the Heders, "those columns, holding up the awful edifice of separateness." The simple Jews would resist this; but experience teaches that "antiquated institutions discordant with the needs of the times at the merest touch of civilization and legal regulations, in spite of the addiction of the population, quickly and easily lose moral credit and, by the nature of things, fall into a sea of oblivion."²⁴ Here Orzeszkowa succumbs totally to the optimistic rhetoric tone of the liberal-radical reformers. Twenty-eight years later (let us depart a little from chronology) this same motif will appear once more in her unfinished journalistic work, unpublished in her life, entitled *O nacjonalizmie żydowskim* (On Jewish Nationalism). Jewish customs, writes Orzeszkowa, are not worth retaining. "Are there any, at least slightly enlightened Jews who would be moved by the brightness of the candles burning on the Sabbath table or would be deeply moved by the sight of a traditional Jewish gabardine?"²⁵ she asks rhetorically.

From the perspective of the late twentieth century, when we know that the brightness of the Sabbath candles often gave reason for emotion and musing, it is worth reflecting on this attitude of the eminent writer who in

her literary compositions was known to express understanding and interest in the specific features of Jewish culture. We see that both the enthusiastic Świętochowski and the quiet and moderate Orzeszkowa expressed in this matter a view that is almost identical; individual features of character cannot therefore serve as an explanation.

The doctrine of the Western classics of positivism cannot form an explanation either. On the contrary, the organicism of Herbert Spencer could be a perfectly suitable ideology for those thinkers who would like to link positivist thought with the respect and sympathy for the diversity of cultures. After all, Spencer believed that in the process of development the organism becomes more complicated and new, specialized cells are formed. Diversity not only does not disappear then, but its development is the key condition of the further progress of the whole. This version of organicism would be relatively easy to reconcile with the romantic faith in the separate task of every national culture.

Eliza Orzeszkowa's thoughts surely went in this direction when she wrote that every tribe, every people and every culture can have a special place in the development of mankind, she did not, however, develop this thought. We find similar ideas also in Bolesław Prus, for whom "the beauty of the world relies on the variety of created beings." Prus believes that "with certainty civilization would be much poorer and weaker" if some individuals, tribes or nations did not have a right to exist.²⁶ But he also did not develop this thread. These quotes show that liberalism based on Spencer's sociology could easily be reconciled with sympathy for multicultural ideals. If therefore the support for cultural centralism could find such strong grounds in positivist thought, then the reason was rather the consciousness of the backwardness of the country than imported elements of the ideology.

Stanisław Szczepanowski in his *Nędza Galicji* summed up and developed further the positivist doctrine of the assimilation of Jews. Supported by numerical data and literary talent, he brilliantly showed that the situation of the Galician Jews is a result of the long-term governmental politics and of the attitude of the Christian population, so it can be fully explained without referring to racial differences. The Jewish exclusivity will cease at the moment when economic growth takes force. Criticizing the economic non-productivity of the Jewish masses, Szczepanowski—similarly to Prus—with equal force criticized other strata of Polish society. Like the whole positivist generation, he always spoke of Jews and Christians—never Jews and Poles. With his rationalist approach and with his attempt to solve the

Jewish question through the economic development, Szczepanowski comes close to the views introduced three quarters of a century earlier by Wawrzyniec Surowiecki.

Modern, exclusivist anti-Semitism, however, already announced its existence. At the end of the nineteenth century, and then increasingly strongly at the beginning of the twentieth century, voices can be heard that the program of Jewish assimilation went bankrupt. Bolesław Prus, who considered himself open to new ideals, wondered already in 1897 whether Zionism is not a good idea, since it would lead to the emigration from Poland of at least part of the Jewish masses is unwilling or unable to assimilate. At least part of the source of the conflict would be removed, and the remaining Jews in the country would find it easier to join into the Polish society.²⁷

The example of Prus is completely different from the aforementioned attitude of Jan Jeleński: while the latter presents an idea in principle not contradictory with liberal thought, in the environment of decidedly anti-liberal slogans and concepts, Prus includes an idea which was becoming popular among the anti-Semites, in the framework of his—fundamentally liberal—outlook on life. In the sympathy for Zionism and support for the emigration of some Jews there is, of course, nothing fundamentally illiberal (at least if we forget about the later developments). If the liberals, such as Szczepanowski, had nothing against the emigration of peasants looking for work, considering that it is better if the Polish peasant finds welfare in America, rather than die of hunger in the home country, then no wonder that they use a similar measure to the emigration of the Jewish poor. Nevertheless this was an ominous signal: a thought appeared that the liberals' longed-for integration of society can be better and more efficiently reached by excluding some of the groups than by the inclusion of all willing to be included into the Polish nation.

A similar signal of a change in attitudes to the Jewish matter was the opinion of the theoretician of the nationality question, Stanisław Herburt-Heybowicz, expressed in his *Zarys pojęć o narodzie* (Outline of the Concepts on Nation). If he refused language rights to the Yiddish-speaking Jews, this can be explained by the traditional reluctance of the Polish liberals to acknowledge Jews as a separate nation. It is more interesting that Jews in his theory are the only ethnic group for whom the state should not establish separate schools and cultural institutions (although Jews can do this from their own funds). It seems that the separateness of Jews disconcerted the liberals to the degree that they were ready even to exempt them from their holy principle of equality before the law.

The above-discussed dissertations of Orzeszkowa are interesting for another reason as well. They make perfectly clear a typical line of defense of liberal rationalism against the attacks of the new cultural trends. Orzeszkowa presents a scheme of the evolution of culture: "in the distant darkness of the past hatred was a tragic necessity,"²⁸ however, now it is already only an atavism, therefore it slowly gives way to a higher feeling—to love. All feeling can only truly "act" "under command of certain rational rules."²⁹

Many people do not, however, subject their feelings under the control of reason. In effect there appear publications such as "the conquering of the world by Jews," whose authors write, "just as the bird sings—from inspiration. [...] This is not the way to do things. Whoever wants to write [...] from the heart itself, without the participation of the hard-working and educated head, let him occupy himself with the arrangement of love letter writing manuals. He will thus render important services to lovers, whose degree of education does not allow them to write down their passionate feelings, and yet will not harm any of the matters of the country."³⁰ Unfortunately, as yet "in very wide social circles emotions rule and are widely spread. The masses, almost the whole peoples, everything that exists beneath the thin stratum of the so-called intelligentsia, and even greater part of the intelligentsia itself, are ruled only by emotions and fantasy."³¹

This fantasy tempts with delusive, all-explaining images. "At the bottom of our soul, shyly hiding before the visage of modern science, there still lies in waiting a tendency to believe in the religious Jewish rule of adding Christian blood to Passover matzos. From time to time our memory recalls faded images of hosts stolen and nailed to trees, of poisoned wells, of black death, riding into Christian countries on the backs of Jews. We never really believe in all this, but in our imagination there burns still a spark of this danger, which was filled by fairy tales of nannies—but there are still enlightened houses, from which the children in the days preceding the Jewish Passover are afraid to go out lest they are snatched by the Jews."³²

Such convictions of individuals do not remain without influence on social life. Especially guilty are those representatives of the intelligentsia who do not hesitate to appeal to such superstitions and fantasies of the crowd. Usually in effect "the initiators lose the direction awakened by their own movement." They cannot "turn the raging elements back in their proper direction, [...] because fully or at least partly possessing their own reflexive authority, they cease to be understood by those who have lost this authority completely," that is by the masses.³³

The train of thought presented above awakens admiration for the shrewdness of Eliza Orzeszkowa. She perceived the relationship between a transformation of culture and the birth of a new world of mass politics. She accurately noticed the danger from the side of “partly educated people who think that they have understood everything,”³⁴ and who become ideological doctrinaires. Finally, she was aware of the danger that all these phenomena form for liberalism and rationalism.

Orzeszkowa went beyond the liberal categories of description, perceiving the influence of the subconsciousness on human activity. Simultaneously, however, she has built in this alarming phenomenon into her own rational vision of the world. She accomplished this with the help of one little word “still”—a basic word used by the liberals in the description of all undesirable phenomena. The quoted characterization of subconscious prejudices is followed by a summary: “The remains of past times, conserved in enlightened classes, hold up their whole existence in unenlightened classes.”³⁵ In this way everything becomes clear: subconscious phobias and resentments are simply superstitions; when higher classes rid themselves of them, they will also disappear from the lower classes. The only defense against these phobias, as against any evil, is popular education, the spreading of which “should be considered the most important of patriotic duties.”³⁶

The development of education will remove hatred and the development of rationalism will eliminate wars, too—and not only because they are contrary to a rationally conceived self-interest. War will tempt no one today: “glittering with steel flashes, the swords of olden knights [...] could dazzle the eyes and delight the fancy [...] But whose eyes can be delighted and whose imagination can take flight by the sight of the Krupp cannon, by the alarming rattle of *mitrailleuses*, or the line of rifle-barrels, which on a given order are pointed by two lines of automata against each other.”³⁷

If Eliza Orzeszkowa had wanted to write a liberal manifesto against the soon to be triumphant era of *fin-de-siècle*, she could not probably have written anything else. Her whole argumentation about the primacy of reason over emotions became shortly upturned by 180 degrees: Dr. Freud announced that subconscious bias, “hiding at the bottom of our soul,” is the main source of culture, and imagination of an ever increasing number of males was carried away, contrary to the expectation of Orzeszkowa, “with the sight of Krupp’s cannon” or with a “line of rifle barrels.” The optimistic linear scheme of the development of society was questioned on two levels: not only as a realistic picture of the future, but also as a declaration of values. It turned out that events do not develop at all from the pri-

macy of “emotion,” “instinct” or “passion” to the primacy of “reason,” which was something obvious not only for Prus or Orzeszkowa, but also—although in a different way—for Libelt and Cieszkowski. Passion is more important than reason, intuition than observation, nature than civilization. Young people distance themselves today from “the narrow-minded [...] organic work. The minds of young people “will not be satisfied by collecting hymenopterous insects, their hearts by collecting petty savings, their energy by the participation in a rowing club,” Jan Ludwik Popławski wrote in the *Głos* in 1887.³⁸

In this way an essential change of perceptions occurs in the history of modern culture: up till then it was often believed that development was tantamount to the continual tightening of the corset repressing spontaneous behavior and replacing it by learned—“civilized”—one. Sentimentalism and romanticism shook this conviction a little, but did not overthrow it; now, however, at the turn of the century, this rationalist concept collapsed. Now the warning of Jan Śniadecki that would have appeared excessive when it was directed at comrades of Adam Mickiewicz or Maurycy Mochnacki took on a new sense.

The liberation of spontaneity, the naturalness of behavior, the rejection of etiquette became—and from that time still remain—ideals, to which artistic, social and even scientific concepts had to adapt. From that time morality did not have to result from the control of impulses by higher mental powers; to the contrary, it was to grow from spontaneous inclinations, and behavior controlled by reason became synonymous with hypocrisy. An attack on the bourgeois mentality, mounted on an unprecedented scale in fine arts, literature and journalism, was not only an expression of strivings for the democratization of society, but above all for the manifestation of new philosophical and social tenets.³⁹

The positivists were afraid of new aesthetics, correctly guessing its consequences beyond the artistic field. “Literature seemingly stands outside the limits of [...] critical reformist thought. It continually repeats that it carries out “art for art’s sake” [...], that its sole task is artistry. In reality, however, it does the same as contemporary knowledge and practical activity, but in a different way. [...] It does not teach, it does not lecture, it does not set to prove, but it describes, praises, presents such examples and images of life whose sight turns the thoughts and feelings in the direction of the general aims of the times”—wrote Świętochowski in 1900. Stubborn as he was in his radicalism and aversion towards middle-class hypocrisy, Świętochowski was also shocked by the pessimism of new trends and their

obsession with existentialist problems accompanied by disregard for social matters. "When Prometheus calls out 'I suffer,' a shiver of compassion goes through us, but when a secondary school pupil calls this out because a school-girl has refused him a dance, our hearts will not change their usual rhythm."⁴⁰

The positivist criticism of modernism came from a stipulation diametrically opposed to the conservative one, even though some opinions sounded similar. Especially Świętochowski, with his impeccable past of a freethinker and libertine, cannot be suspected of being shocked by, let us say, the *Flowers of Evil* by Baudelaire (published in Polish translation in 1894) because of its immorality. The problem lies somewhere else. The slogan "art for art's sake" and the reluctance to tackle social problems had to seem to the positivists an escape from the battlefield, whilst the road to the construction of a modern capitalist society in Poland was still so far-away, and the new wave of irrationalism had to look like the rebirth of obscurantism, not completely destroyed by the growth of learning. Even in statements that would seem related to the spirit of the new era, a rationalist outlook is still hidden. If Świętochowski demanded some relaxation of sexual morality, it was not because he credited the desires with a deciding role in controlling human behavior, but because sexual "purity is contrary to human nature, it exposes man to diseases and mental deviations"⁴¹—and so it is the reason itself that demands a satisfaction of desires.

The attitude of the positivists may have been influenced by the fear that the new romantic generation would expose the country to repression comparable to that after 1863. This aspect does not seem to be the most important. The positivists noticed a connection between the new cultural trends and the new style of politics—they saw how elite politics was superseded by mass politics, with its vulgarity, primitivism and emotionalism. For people who made rationalism their standard, this meant a sentence of death. The new style of politics has finally sent into a land of dreams an old liberal ideal which, although always rather utopian, was alive till the late nineteenth century: the ideal of such a political system in which the victory of any party would have depended on the strength of rational arguments.

Discussing the reaction of liberals to the arrival of the new era, it is worth looking at the aforementioned book of Stanisław Herburt-Heybowicz, *Zarys pojęć o narodzie*, published under the pen-name I. Snitko in Lwów in 1901. In the whole nineteenth-century Polish liberal thought, this book is the most mature attempt at facing the modern nationality question and at opposing the idea of modern ethnic nationalism.

It is hard to believe that deeper reflection on the ways of solving the nationality question is almost absent in the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Polish thought. So much attention has been devoted—above all in Polish romanticism—to the philosophical aspect of the national idea that few people were willing to concentrate on the practical problems of the coexistence of various ethnic groups on the same territory. Whilst other nations of the Habsburg monarchy—Czechs, Hungarians, Austrian, Germans, or Romanians—have in their writings interesting attempts at solving this problem, the Poles, even in Galicia, had little to say on this matter. This happened in spite of the fact that the lands of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth comprised an ethnic mixture not less complicated than the lands of the Danubian monarchy. In such a situation Heybowicz's book deserves special attention, all the more because historians until now have shown little interest in the work and its author.

Stanisław Herburt-Heybowicz came from a family of landed gentry from the present-day Byelorussia. He spent his whole adult life in Kalisz, working in the state administration and taking part in local cultural life. This loyal czarist clerk dedicated his free time to research; he spent his holidays in the libraries of Poznań, Cracow, Breslau and Berlin, becoming familiar with the recent literature relating to national problems. The result was the above-mentioned work not published until a year after his death.

Włodzimierz Spasowicz acknowledged Heybowicz as a late representative of Polish romantic patriotism. Andrzej Walicki, in turn, is of the opinion that Heybowicz's links with romanticism are only superficial.⁴² In fact, it is difficult to ascribe our author univocally to the romantic or positivist tradition. He regards with equal esteem Supiński, "one of our most superb thinkers," and Krasiński or Cieszkowski. His vision, however, is not at all inconsistent. From thinkers of Polish romanticism, Heybowicz takes the admiration of the very idea of the nation as the embodiment of the highest ideals of mankind. At the same time, however—and here Walicki sees a significant difference in comparison with romanticism—he voids this idea of any political content considering the nation to be an exclusively cultural phenomenon. That is why Heybowicz claims that state (a phenomenon political in its essence) does not have and cannot have anything in common with nation. The main aim of his book is to show the errors of all the endeavors of identifying nation with state. The work of Heybowicz, whilst impressing with its great erudition, is not a strictly historical or sociological book. The author does not limit himself to the analysis of the phenomena, but always judges them from the point of view of his own value system.

Such a method, present in all the classics of political thought up to Tocqueville, was in the 1890s already a little antiquated. The slow, bombastic and dignified style makes this old-fashioned character even stronger. Although the fundamentals of Heybowicz's philosophy are eclectic; assigning them to a specific trend of political thought does not create any problem: without the slightest doubt the work grew out of liberal tradition. The motto from John Stuart Mill—"after the primary necessities of food and raiment, freedom is the first and strongest want of human nature," serving also as a final sentence of the whole work—is a good representation not only of Heybowicz's political creed, but also of his philosophy of mankind. Heybowicz believes that the striving to maximize individual freedom provides a principal motivation for human activities. From this belief it logically follows that ethical factor must be decisive in evaluating any hypothesis. The view propagating immoral solutions, oppression of individuals or groups, has to be impracticable from its mere nature. Such an overoptimistic methodology at the turn of the century had to look naïve and undoubtedly made Heybowicz's book look even more old-fashioned. The liberalism of Heybowicz manifests itself not only through his conviction about the universal character of strivings for individual freedom and their future triumph. Heybowicz is also a declared, if not fully consistent, methodological individualist. The aim of the state is only and exclusively the safety of individuals, whereas the national feeling resides only in individuals and can be tolerated or persecuted only in them. Such a conviction is not rare in classical liberalism; Heybowicz took it from the work of an outstanding Hungarian liberal politician József Eötvös *Der Einfluss der Herrschenden Ideen des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts auf den Staat*.⁴³ Such an individualism collides, however, with the concept dominating in East-Central Europe, according to which nation is the whole, separate from the individuals of which it consists, and can demand certain collective rights.

Herburt-Heybowicz avoids this conflict, radically differentiating the concept of nation from the concept of nationality. It is true that nation is a collective whole, and not only the sum of its individuals; however, the true domain of the development of a nation is its culture, and therefore the activity of a nation remains outside the field of the proper interests of state. Nationality, to the contrary, is a trait of individuals, as it marks the individual features and convictions resulting from the affiliation of a given individual to the nation. Of these individual features the most important is language. Nationality therefore, and not nation, should be the object of protection by the free state which guarantees all sorts of individual liberties.

Opposition to the idea of a nation state is for Heybowicz a matter of principle: nationalism, understood by him, as the endeavor to match the state borders with the ethnic ones, is seen by him interestingly enough, as a tendency caused not by national ideals, but by the aspirations of a state aiming to maximize its power. Like many liberals of that era (such as Włodzimierz Spasowicz), Heybowicz compares the national question with the religious one: in the past the state tried to enforce one religion on all of its citizens, later, however, it gave this up and acknowledged religion as a private affair. It will be the same with nationality: today some states still try to force the same nationality on all citizens, they will soon understand, however, that the national convictions of the citizens are their private affair, which should not be interfered with.

Heybowicz is not an enthusiast of federal solutions, as they do not protect from nationalist oppression. In Central and Eastern Europe, where numerous nationalities are intermingled with each other, there is no way of carving out purely ethnic territories—therefore, on the territory of every federal unit the oppression of national minorities would still continue, and the despotic state federalizing itself, would change one centralized oppression into many local oppressions. The true road is different: benefits flowing from the existence of modern centralized states should be retained while introducing full legal equality of languages used by the inhabitants. Heybowicz does not share the anxieties of linguistic nature advanced by the opponents of the legal equality of languages—after all, it would mean that the state officials would need to know at most three languages, including their own. The internal administrative language should be the language of the majority in the area, while the minority should have equal right to contact the administration in their own language. One of the languages will become *via facti* the language of the state, but the legal acknowledgement of the state language should be avoided, as it would give to one language too much preponderance over the rest. This language will be used by the central government, as well as in the correspondence of the central and provincial authorities.

The ideas concerning the reconstruction of the educational system deserve special attention. Heybowicz tries to translate the common liberal conviction about importance of education into concrete legal solutions. The separation of nationalities belongs to the basic reasons of the conflict between them; schools therefore should bring people closer together. According to Heybowicz, the basic fault of article XIX of the Austrian constitutional law on civil rights is a fragment (added by the wish of Bohemian

Germans) forbidding the introduction of a compulsory foreign language in schools. The opposite should happen: the school—primary as well as secondary—has a duty to teach the language, the history and the culture of all the nationalities living in a certain region. Children from two different nationalities should learn in separate classes (each in its own language), but in the same schools. If the minority reaches such a degree of cultural development that it demands a university for itself, then a bilingual university should be formed, gradually founding minority language chairs as happens in Lwów. Two completely separate universities (as in Prague) should be avoided because this leads to separatism and hostility between the nationalities.

Wherever the social and ethnic divisions coincide, as was generally the case in East-Central Europe, the culturally (though not always numerically) dominant group should, according to Heybowicz, support the cultural development of its weaker partner. The cultural equalization through the intelligentsia of the weaker group would aid in mellowing the national and social conflicts. The author does not differentiate historical from non-historical nations: each group has a right to exist, so long as its members profess separate national identity. There is nothing wrong if the borderland produces new intermediary national identities: such new nationalities as e.g. “Hungaro-Romanians, Polono-Germans, Germano-Danes, Franco-Germans etc. ‘would become’ the centers of extremely powerful spiritual links between nations.”⁴⁴

Heybowicz, let us risk a metaphor, walks over a minefield of modern nationalism, as if he did not realize the danger. No crack appears on the armor plate of the nineteenth-century liberal optimism: our author, therefore, is able to admire the thinkers, whose ideas—already in his time—were evolving towards chauvinism. He knows well that nationalism, being opposed to the spirit of freedom, cannot have anything in common with true national ideals, which are the incarnation of this freedom. In his thinking there is no place for the question, whether by chance modern nationalism was not born from the romantic national ideal: before he had even set himself the question, he already answered it negatively.

That is why Heybowicz could be delighted with Fichte, with his *Speeches to the German Nation* and his program of national education, that is why he, an admirer of a multinational state, writes about the regaining of independence by Greece and about the unification of Italy with the enthusiasm of a Romanticist and at the same time a man educated in the culture of antiquity, for whom free Greece and united Italy are the triumph of historical justice.

This somewhat naïve optimism cannot overshadow the interesting side of Herburt-Heybowicz's thoughts. One can mention the coherent idea of solving the ethnic conflict through the introduction of legal equality of languages without undermining the unitarian structure of the modern state. Interestingly enough, this idea was joined by the concept of nation as a cultural community, which helped Heybowicz to avoid reducing the national question to a linguistic problem. The vision of school as a mutually integrating factor and not as an instrument of national oppression deserves mention, too. To a greater degree than other Polish thinkers (with the possible exception of the social-democratic theoretician Kazimierz Kelles-Krauz), Herburt-Heybowicz remains within the intellectual sphere of Austro-Hungarian debates on the nationality question, although he himself was active in the Russian partition.

The concept of the so-called "personal autonomy," given to various nationalities, not to territories, developed by the Austrian social democrats at the turn of the century, seems to stem from the same roots as Heybowicz's ideas. Both the Austrian socialists and our author set themselves the same task: granting rights to each of the nationalities without disturbing the homogenous administrative structure of the state. It is worth adding that considering the tendencies of the development of European politics, Heybowicz saw everywhere the trend to separate the concepts of state and nation: he referred to the legislation of Austria, Belgium, and Switzerland. At the same time the nationalists saw an exactly opposite process aimed to merge these two concepts. This is an interesting example of how easy it is to perceive a tendency in agreement with one's own wishes in complicated historical processes and acknowledge it as the realization of the objective laws of historical development.

The work of Heybowicz can also be acknowledged as an attempt—it is not clear how conscious—of saving liberal ideals in a post-positivist era by joining them with the ideals of romanticism. A similar attempt—this time fully consciously—was undertaken at the same time by Stanisław Szczepanowski.

The success of *The Poverty of Galicia* was not enough for Szczepanowski; he believed that in order to rebuild the economy it is necessary to transform the Polish psyche, and he dedicated his works of the 1890s to this task. Seemingly, this intention is not original: the positivists also wanted to transform the psyche of the Poles in order to clear the way for the modernization of the economy and society. Szczepanowski, however, wanted to do this in a completely different way: instead of exorcising the

ghosts of romanticism and resounding the charms of utilitarianism, he decided to prove that the Polish romanticism itself provides the best reason for industrialization, the development of capitalism and the cultivation of everyday virtues. (In this harnessing of romanticism to the defense of the ideals universally associated with positivism, a certain similarity arises between Szczepanowski and Heybowicz). In the wake of Cieszkowski and Krasiński, he presents the striving for economic development as an “Act,” as an action that is first of all spiritual. Such an “Act” will be possible if the basic motivation becomes not only the wish for profit, but also the readiness to self-sacrifice and the enthusiasm for achieving a great civilizing aim (in this joining of semi-religious enthusiasm with capitalist economy we can perhaps hear the echo of English Puritan tradition).⁴⁵ Szczepanowski, with his conscious endeavor to the synthesis of romanticism with positivism, was an exception. Challenges of the new era were usually understood quite differently, and the radical intelligentsia believed that the liberal-socialist reapprochement opens the most promising perspectives for progress.

The radical intelligentsia—much more radical than the liberals—dominated the public life of the Kingdom at the turn of the century. Secret education, demonstrations, workers’ movements, the secret activity of new political groups, such as the National League—all this, together with cultural changes, pushed the positivists into the background, although Prus’ *Chronicles* and the articles of Świętochowski as previously tried to show the way to the Polish intelligentsia. More and more often, however, this way was considered a blind alley.

Notes

- 1 Świętochowski, *Liberum Veto*, vol. II, 408 [see footnote 69 to Chapter 5].
- 2 On the ideas of the leading thinker of modern Polish nationalism, Zygmunt Balicki, see Joanna Kurczewska, *Naród w socjologii i ideologii polskiej* (Warsaw, 1979), 206ff. Cf. also Wojciech Modzelewski, *Naród i postęp. Problematyka narodowa w ideologii i myśli społecznej pozytywistów warszawskich* (Warsaw, 1977), 15 and *passim*.
- 3 Cf. Władysław Wścieklica, “Rojenia socjalistów polskich wobec nauki ich mistrza” [Illusions of the Polish socialists confronted with the teachings of their master], in *Ognisko*, 85–114 [see footnote 63 to Chapter 5].
- 4 Dunin, *Prawo własności*, 141, 161 and *passim*; Dunin, “[Review of] J. Au, ‘Socjalizm jako objaw choroby społecznej,’” *Ateneum*, August 1879, 375–380. On Bolesław Prus’ views on socialism, see Józef Bachórz, “Pan Łęcki czyta Supińskiego,” *Przegląd Humanistyczny*, 1984, no. 7–8, 85–96.
- 5 A. Oskierko, *Socjaliści z katedry* [Armchair Socialists], *Ateneum*, September 1883, 403–405. Cf. also L. Gumplowicz, *Socjalizm państwowy* [State socialism], *Prawda*, 1884, no.

- 16, 182–184. Actuality of List's economic opinions is stressed by W. Wścieklica, "Z powodu nowej taryfy celnej—I" [On account of the new customs tariff, Part I], *Prawda*, 1882, no. 29, 338–340.
- 6 Włodzimierz Spasowicz, *Pisma krytycznoliterackie*, ed. Janina Kulczycka-Saloni (Warsaw, 1981), 469.
- 7 On Jeleński's book see Cała, *Asymilacja Żydów*, 279; Jaszcuk, *Spór pozytywistów*, 210ff.
- 8 Cała, *Asymilacja Żydów*, 270–271.
- 9 Świętochowski, *Liberum veto*, vol. I, 249; 263–264.
- 10 Świętochowski, *Liberum veto*, vol. II, 123–128.
- 11 Prus, *Kroniki*, vol. V, 122. The attitude of the Polish positivists to the problem of cultural diversity is dealt with by Cała, *Asymilacja Żydów*, 248.
- 12 Eliza Orzeszkowa, *O Żydach i kwestii żydowskiej* [On Jews and the Jewish Question] (Warsaw, 1913) (First edition published in 1882); Orzeszkowa, *Patriotyzm i kosmopolityzm. Studium społeczne* [Patriotism and cosmopolitanism. A social study] (Warsaw, 1888).
- 13 Orzeszkowa, *O Żydach*, 5.
- 14 Orzeszkowa, *O Żydach*, 13.
- 15 Orzeszkowa, *O Żydach*, 15.
- 16 Orzeszkowa, *O Żydach*, 19.
- 17 Orzeszkowa, *O Żydach*, 29.
- 18 Orzeszkowa, *Patriotyzm*, 35; 98.
- 19 Orzeszkowa, *Patriotyzm*, 134.
- 20 Orzeszkowa, *Patriotyzm*, 141.
- 21 Orzeszkowa, *O Żydach*, 26.
- 22 Orzeszkowa, *O Żydach*, 44.
- 23 Orzeszkowa, *O Żydach*, 38.
- 24 Orzeszkowa, *O Żydach*, 41.
- 25 Orzeszkowa, *O Żydach*, 229.
- 26 Prus, *Kroniki*, vol. XV, 198.
- 27 Prus, *Kroniki*, vol. XV, 201–205. The evolution of Prus' attitudes towards the Jewish question is treated by Józef Bachórz in his introduction to a selection of Prus' *Chronicles* (B. Prus, *Kroniki*, ed. Józef Bachórz, (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1994), lxxxiii–lxxxv), as well as by Cała (*Asymilacja Żydów*, 257–266), who perhaps stretches the anti-Semitic aspects of Prus' ideas a bit too far.
- 28 Orzeszkowa, *Patriotyzm*, 149.
- 29 Orzeszkowa, *Patriotyzm*, 163.
- 30 Orzeszkowa, *O Żydach*, 53.
- 31 Orzeszkowa, *Patriotyzm*, 163.
- 32 Orzeszkowa, *O Żydach*, 49.
- 33 Orzeszkowa, *Patriotyzm*, 173.
- 34 Orzeszkowa, *Patriotyzm*, 234.
- 35 Orzeszkowa, *O Żydach*, 50.
- 36 Orzeszkowa, *Patriotyzm*, 198. On the positivist conviction that old remedies would be able to cure new problems as well see Roman Zimand, "*Dekadentyzm*" warszawski (Warsaw, 1964), 97.
- 37 Orzeszkowa, *Patriotyzm*, 124–125.
- 38 Jan Ludwik Popławski, *Pisma polityczne* [Political writings] (Warsaw, 1910), vol. I, 6, 13.
- 39 This cultural change is discussed at length by Zdzisław Krasnodebski, *Upadek idei postępu* [Collapse of the Idea of Progress] (Warsaw: PIW, 1991), 182–208.
- 40 Aleksander Świętochowski, *Wybór pism krytycznoliterackich* [Selected writings on literary criticism], ed. M. Brykalska, S. Sandler (Warsaw, 1973), 556, 546.

- 41 A. Świątochowski, "Siedem grzechów głównych. III. Nieczystość" [Seven deadly sins. III. Incontinence], *Prawda*, 1882, no. 39, 461–462.
- 42 Włodzimierz Spasowicz, "Stanisław Herbut-Heybowicz i jego praca o narodowości" [S. Heybowicz and his work on nationality] in Spasowicz, *Pisma* [Works], vol. VII, (St. Petersburg, 1903), 317–344. See also *Zarys dziejów filozofii polskiej, 1815–1918*, ed. Andrzej Walicki, 2nd edition (Warsaw, 1986), 404.
- 43 On the influence of Eötvös on Heybowicz see my essay "Węgierski Tocqueville i jego polski wielbiciel," in *Węgierska wiosna Ludów a walki narodowowyzwoleńcze w XIX – wiecznej Europie*, ed. J. Snopek (Warsaw: Węgierski Instytut Kultury), 85–89.
- 44 I. Snitko [Stanisław Herbut-Heybowicz], *Zarys pojęć o narodzie* [Outline of Concepts on the Nation] (Lwów, 1901), 480.
- 45 See the writings of Szczepanowski collected in the volume *Idea polska* [The Polish Idea], ed. Stanisław Borzym (Warsaw, 1987).

CHAPTER 7

In a World of Alien Ideals

Deep social, cultural, and political changes, analyzed in the previous chapter, manifested themselves variously in different regions of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Leaving aside the Prussian partition, where conservative solidarism (natural reaction against oppression) obliterated the once strong liberal tradition of the late nineteenth century, let us compare the situation in the Polish Kingdom and Galicia. In the Austrian partition, the changes occurred in an evolutionary way. Resistance against the conservative monopoly of power was growing since the early 1890s; new political parties were being created and even the old democratic opposition re-emerged from oblivion. Modernist culture flourished; the political system of the Habsburg Monarchy (at least of its Western half) was becoming more and more democratic, as attested by the introduction of the universal male suffrage to the Vienna Parliament (1907). Even the reform of the Galician Diet was realized, after many perturbations, in the spring of 1914 (although the war hindered its implementation).

The effect of this gradual development was that the masses entered politics in a relatively peaceful manner. The awakened political activity of peasants and workers was channeled by legal parties—socialist, peasant, nationalist, or social-Christian. Tensions were high, yet the political tradition was not broken and the old parties, though weakened, did not disappear completely. The heirs of the old liberal democratic ideals retained a certain influence in Western Galicia until the collapse of the Monarchy. One should note here the higher level of education and political culture of the Galicians as compared with the inhabitants of Russian Poland: this was a result of wide participation in various associations, cooperatives and other institutions of civil society that abounded in Galicia after the introduction of constitutional government in the 1860s.

In the Russian partition, things took a different course. Permanent sup-

pression of attempts at moderate change resulted in a bloody revolutionary outburst from 1904 to 1907. The activation of the masses did not take place via legal patriotic manifestations or electoral campaigns (such as in Galicia) but through strikes, assassinations, and street fights. The situation was naturally favorable to the radicals (both from the right and the left), whereas the center was reduced almost to nothing. Paradoxically, the liberals of the Polish Kingdom gained an opportunity to take political action exactly at the same time as they lost real political influence through a sudden radicalization of society. Freedom came to Russia a generation too late.

The liberals, however, did not yet realize it. In late 1904, in the wake of political liberalization, a new party emerged: Związek Postępowo-Demokratyczny (Progressive Democratic Union), soon spreading its activities over all the larger towns of the Polish Kingdom. Aleksander Świętochowski became its president with the lawyer Aleksander Lednicki, living in Moscow, as his deputy. Amongst its activists, one can find Stanisław Kempner (the editor of the *Gazeta handlowa* [Trade Newspaper] and from 1906 of the *Nowa Gazeta* [The New Newspaper]), as well as the theorist of cooperativism, Jerzy Kurnatowski. The liberal groupings kept splitting and merging over the next few years; the whole movement was generally called progressive democracy.¹

The lesson drawn by the Warsaw liberals from the 1905 Revolution was that of impotence and helplessness in the face of the rampant emotions and brute force of mass politics. "A revolting crowd, if addressed by a rowdy centaur and by the wise Aristotle, will surely follow the former and scorn the latter. The psychological mechanism of this strange phenomenon, in which a handful of people, distinguished only by courage, gains control over an enormous, mostly passive mass, has been neglected until now [...] It seems that an invisible and dangerous spirit, some benevolent tyrant, seizes the scepter and that those who make the people act in a certain way are only the heralds and executors of his orders"—mused Świętochowski in January 1906.

The old positivists had, of course, their own diagnosis: the immaturity of the backward society and its inability to organize itself. Świętochowski says: "When we saw how the handful of bourgeois sportsmen of disorder toyed with the lives and property of the working class, recklessly exciting them into revolt, we understood what it means to be a disorganized society."

The relative freedom of speech allows him to add a political argument: now it is clear "what a great harm the government inflicted upon us, hold-

ing back and persecuting all organizations [...] Not only did it hinder cultural development but made the defense against internal anarchy impossible. In effect, persons that would never gain any influence in Germany, England, or France, enjoy mass support. Now we know that slavery does not teach us to raise and respect freedom, but it accustoms us to force and tyranny, to the fact that we can trample freedom in the same way as those against whom we defend it.”² The threat posed by the radical masses to individual freedom was noticed by European liberal thought at least after 1848; in Poland, however, it remained marginal until the beginning of the twentieth century.

It seemed that revolution realized the worst anxieties of positivists. Already twenty years earlier, they wrote about the danger of degeneration of socialism into terrorism and banditry. They always warned that socialism, by strengthening class divisions, makes it difficult to form a modern, integrated, “organic” society. Now it seemed to them that socialism had stirred the enmity between the classes to such a degree that threatened with the return (albeit in a new form) of the caste system that the liberals had been battling since time immemorial.

“The factious excitement pushed the opposite camps into a fratricidal fight”³ —wrote Stanisław Kempner. “The brutal destruction of the economic system will not produce the desired social reform. [...] Those who with factious doggedness excite the passions of the working class, wanting to deepen the class division rather than to unite society, are mistaken.”⁴ Świątochowski was more blunt: “Down with ‘classes,’ down with parties built on them, for whom everything is irrelevant except the interests of a party, i.e., the benefit of a crew of one pirate ship.”⁵

The liberals presented their own program in a significantly modified form in comparison with the positivist one. It was to fit the new era and the changed form of politics. The liberals got rid of their former skepticism towards democracy. Much as they disliked socialists, their radicalism, class separatism, and most of all their use of violence, the liberals took over many socialist ideals. What was emblematic of this change was that the liberals became ashamed of their own name for the first time since the word “liberalism” appeared in the political vocabulary. More and more often, the word was associated with soulless *laissez-faire*-ism, condemning the weaker and promoting the ruthless. Throughout Europe, groups originating from the liberal tradition started to devise new names for themselves. They called themselves progressive, democratic, radical, or reformist. Progressive democracy in the Polish Kingdom was no exception.

Its ideology referred to the Western European and above all, to the French radicalism. Within the Russian Empire, their closest ideological counterpart were the Russian “Cadets”—the party described as belonging either to the left wing of the liberal camp or to the radical-democratic trend.⁶ Aleksander Lednicki, an activist both of progressive democracy and of the cadet party, served as a link between the two groups.

To acquaint oneself with the socio-economic views of the progressive democrats, one can turn to Kempner’s *Zarysy ekonomii społecznej* (An Outline of Social Economics) published first in 1901, with a second, revised edition in 1906. Kempner had no doubts about the vices of capitalist economy. Economics is not ethically insensitive: it must regulate the economic life “according to the demands of social justice” which relies on “the equilibrium of the advantages of all economic factors.”⁷

“Radicals”—wrote one of the Polish theoreticians of the trend, Jerzy Kurnatowski—are close to socialists in “their deep dislike of the social system in which money has become the measure of all value [...] they come closer to the liberals [...] in their respect for personal freedom.” Weaker stress on the class struggle distinguishes them from the socialists, as does their conviction that private property is not bound to disappear. What separates them from the liberals, in turn, is the belief in the necessity of state intervention in social life.⁸

In politics, the radicals were probably closer to the liberals than to the socialists. They rejected the socialist dream of the new revolution, since—as Kurnatowski wrote with the French revolution in mind—it has already taken place and its fruit is political freedom. All further reforms can now be performed legally. The radicals emphasized the importance of personal freedom and the social role of the educated elite. In economics, however, they were closer to revisionist socialism, which they frequently mentioned with approval. According to Kempner, the free-market economy, as devoid of central planning, is condemned to waste and inefficiency by its very nature. In this system there may happen, e.g., that one hundred factories are built where only sixty are needed, which results in capital being “uselessly frozen and wasted.”⁹

Such waste is partially prevented by the syndicates (i.e. groupings of private companies). Not being state institutions, however, they cannot cure the economy. Although the author notices the role of egoism as the motivation of economic activities, he is more interested in “the socio-economic factor.”¹⁰ In the final reckoning, this factor is not contradictory to economic egoism; their equilibrium, however, is achieved not

by the free play of market forces (as in classical liberal thought) but by the government consciously implementing the scientifically discovered social laws.

Unlike Marxists, the radicals considered these laws to be essentially ethical—here Kempner comes close to non-Marxist socialism, whose enthusiast in contemporary Poland was Edward Abramowski. “Ethics”—wrote Kempner—“has already established the regulations of life, having the same application to other fields as to economics.”¹¹ Kurnatowski referred to the social utopia of John Ruskin, created a generation before, which was only then gaining popularity amongst the intellectuals of Europe: new technical inventions make labor more humane, so that it gives people satisfaction and not only a livelihood. Instead of inhumane, “alienating” (to use a Marxist term) factory labor, the work of the future would take place in small workshops enabling the producers to identify fully with their occupation. This small-shop utopia belonged to the popular threads of social thought in contemporary Europe; in Poland, similar views were presented by the well-known economist Zofia Daszyńska-Golińska. Hopes for the development of light industry and its victory in the competition with great factories were linked with new sources of energy—above all, with electrical engines.

The engines themselves, however, will not suffice: the state must intervene. “Intervention in order to organize economic cooperation is nothing else but the fulfillment of the principles of moral solidarism. Since the law is allowed to regulate the limits of general justice [...] then why cannot there exist a code of socio-economic legislation? [...] Legal systems of all countries have already taken this road.”¹²

This line of argument is closer to socialism (if not necessarily to Marxist) than to liberalism. The fear of excessive state power, always present in classical liberal thought, was gone, together with the conviction that the economic independence of individuals is the basis of their political freedom, and that self-organizing civil society would solve problems better than state authority. Kempner denies that he advocates the complete replacement of the “economic activities within society at large” with “public administration” and emphasizes the limits of state intervention; his ideal would be an economy regulated by various non-governmental organizations rather than by the state. At the same time, he believed that due to the immaturity of social initiatives “the state has to fulfill the functions of the social organism for a time,” and that “etatist politics is a surrogate for socialization.”¹³ After a century, liberalism seemed to return to its starting point, that is, to

the liberal etatism of the enlightened bureaucrats of the Duchy of Warsaw and the constitutional kingdom of Poland.

And if so, then the break with the liberal tradition is weaker than it appeared to the radicals themselves. They saw the history of liberalism in a rather simplified way, reducing it to ruthless competition in the spirit of the Manchester school and Herbert Spencer. In liberal thought they failed to notice the strong etatist and centralist component or the critical view of unrestrained competition in numerous liberal authors. The critique of competition, often recurring on the pages of Kempner's book, is softened by his distinction between competition and what he calls *współubieganie się* (universal contest). He credits the former only with negative features, most of all absence of any rules of fair play, whereas the latter is a "positive symptom."¹⁴ Kempner criticizes the social-Darwinist idea of struggle for life. His desired situation is that of struggle against adversities of nature, and not against other people. Writing in this way, he believes to oppose the liberal tradition: he clearly does not know that it was only the nationalists who recently promoted social Darwinism to the rank of the supreme principle of social life. The whole liberal tradition, European as well as Polish—Supiński, Orzeszkowa, Prus, or Szczepanowski—takes here a stance identical with his own. Thus the centralist and anti-individualist radicals remain within the sphere of influence of liberal thought, even when they believe to act against it.

The new radical movement differed from the old liberalism in more than just a change of socio-economic attitudes. The problems of moral and educational reform seemed to concern them more than the earlier generations. The positivists addressed the problem and their opinions seemed quite radical for the time but appeared antiquated at the dawn of the new century. New social groups in the political arena—peasants, workers, as well as women for the first time emerging as a self-conscious social group—were looking for a new, more spontaneous form of expressing their opinions and aims. They rejected the traditional, elitist style of political argumentation that tended to favor compromise. In this way, the stress on pedagogical problems, on manners, and on *Weltanschauung* appeared not only as a result of a great search for new values and models in the insecure atmosphere of the *fin de siècle*, but also as a result of social and political changes. The interdependency of the growth of modernist culture and the birth of mass society was noted long ago by Roman Zimand in his pioneering book about Warsaw "decadentism."

The emancipation of women entered a new phase. No longer were they

satisfied with the tolerance for wage-earning spinsters: they demanded equal opportunities in education, labor and state bureaucracy (where their chances of promotion were legally restricted). In practice, this applied mostly to Galicia where Poles had access to offices, and affected especially the position of the growing rank of women teachers.

At the same time, the hitherto marginal question of women's position in marriage was given a new significance. The attempts at reform of civil legislation subordinating wives to husbands were accompanied by ever-stronger voices calling for a new treatment of the institution of marriage. The old postulates of marriage as a love match (as opposed to an arranged match) and of the right to divorce (demanded by Świętochowski for years) were sided by calls for change of attitudes with respect to sex. Not only women of letters (Gabriela Zapolska) but also journalists close to the radical movement (Kazimiera Bujwidowa, Iza Moszczeńska-Rzepecka) wrote about free love, spontaneity of emotions and rejection of hypocrisy. Until then the liberals desperately tried to prove that there is no fundamental difference between secular and traditional morality; rather than to proclaim a revolution in ethics, they criticized the abuses of religious morality. Only gradually and timidly did they start questioning their old philosophical axiom that reason has to curb passions and acknowledging the right to spontaneity.

This newly won spontaneity manifested itself in the sudden rise of anti-religious and anti-clerical feelings. It is not at all evident why the rise in spontaneity should result in a departure from religion and not, for example, in a rise of devotion; yet it seemed obvious then that the protest against religion is an intellectual equivalent of getting rid of the corset. In their position towards religion, the early 20th-century Polish liberals underwent a change no smaller than in other fields of their reflection.¹⁵

Before, from Napoleonic times to positivism, the liberals expected the clergy to assist them in the work of modernizing society. By now, however, they had shifted to the French model that aimed at the greatest possible exclusion of the Church from social life, from schools, hospitals, nurseries and all public debate. Świętochowski was pleased to see the progressive forces growing and the "breaking up of the bonds of spiritual slavery and the tyranny of the clergy." This process began in Poland forty years earlier, but "now adopts an ever larger scale."¹⁶

All these changes were certainly influenced by radical French anti-clericalism. Even more important was probably the fact that, by the early twentieth century, the modern state had already grown strong, had ex-

panded its structures, and the 1905 revolution gave hope that, even in Russian Poland, the state was about to stop its anti-Polish activities and that its institutions could be changed for the benefit of Polish society. One could think that the social activity of the Church becomes unnecessary and even harmful.

Liberals welcomed pro-reform trends in the Church. Especially when excommunicated by Pope Pius XI, the leaders of modernism could count on the sympathy of progressives all over Europe. No wonder, therefore, that Ignacy Radliński in his work *Katolicyzm, modernizm, myśl wolna* (Catholicism, Modernism, Free Thought) clearly emphasized the proximity of the reform currents within the Church and the ideals of the free thinkers. Such a position is not quite clear: from the philosophical point of view, the rationalists, convinced of the lack of rational justification of all religion, and the Catholics striving to liberate faith from the ties of formalism and intellectualism of neo-scholastic theology, should have nothing in common. In this case, the liberals simply seem to support those who fought against the power of Catholicism.¹⁷

Even more often the liberals considered harmful not only clericalism (namely, the excessive influence of the clergy on social life) but the very profession of religious principles. When the case of Father Izidor Kajetan Wyslouch (known also under the pen name Antoni Szech), who left his monastery, accusing the Church of excessive conservatism, became notorious in 1908, Świętochowski devoted to him a favorable column, at the same time reproaching him for his perseverance in unfounded hopes for the Church reform.¹⁸ The conviction (visible in its embryonic form in the “young” positivists in the 1870s) that the Catholic Church, and above all the Papacy, is an obsolete institution looking after its own material interests, was steadily gaining ground.

“The interests of the Roman curia above the interests of the Catholic nations, subordinate to this curia”¹⁹—thus the *Nowa Gazeta* summarized the main principle of Papal politics, while the *Kultura Polska* wrote (with the pen of Świętochowski?) about “the density of the intellectual darkness that embraces the dying power in the Vatican” and about the “breakneck dance of impotence and despair” carried out by the Papacy.²⁰ Stanisław Kempner emphasized in 1912 that progressive democrats as a political group should not include fighting against religion in their program; and yet he too was convinced of an unfathomable abyss between faith and science, and that “the spreading of the teachings of free thinkers aims, in a way, at draining the sources of faith.”²¹ Other liberal activists did not hide their belief that—

as put by Józef Wasecug—"the anti-clerical fight must be linked with the propaganda of rationalist tendencies,"²² which makes it impossible to fight clericalism without fighting religion. Iza Moszczeńska wrote about the harmfulness of religious education—it was considered absurd to teach religion and modern biology at the same time. "Take your pick; either throw out the teacher of natural history and bring in a priest, or throw out the priest and bring in a natural historian"²³—wrote one of the liberal journalists. Only the latter possibility was taken seriously by the liberals.

Demands to abolish religious education in schools were paired by the postulate for some form of sexual education. Meanwhile, the voices on the other side of the political stage had also become more radical, even more loudly demanding a religious school fully subordinate to religious principles. In this way, the shaky compromise worked out by the liberals during the nineteenth century, according to which a school should (at least in theory) remain secular, although with the compulsory teaching of religion, came under fire from both sides.

The critical attitude towards religion naturally called for a new evaluation of Polish history, denying the link between Catholicism and Polishness as well as showing the harmful influence of the Church on the national past. Popular works written in this strain often matched the level of the books written by the partisans of the opposite "Catholic-national" direction. Anticlerical organizations came into being, such as the League of Free Thought. Andrzej Niemojewski, the writer, journalist and editor of *Myśl Niepodległa* (Independent Thought) was the most distinguished disseminator of irreligiosity. Some works of the free thinkers, however, deserve serious attention; Ignacy Radliński's studies on the history of religion, valuable by the professional standards of the day, were towering above the popular anticlerical productions. True services in the fight against the intolerance towards non-Catholics and the clericalization of public life rendered by the outstanding linguist, Jan Baudouin de Courtenay, should not be forgotten either.

Already in the time of positivism, liberals proclaimed that ethics did not depend on religion; it was, however, only with the arrival of the new century that the idea of independent ethics based on rational principles gained popularity. "Growth of knowledge, while showing to the individuals their position within a nation, and teaching them their duties, teaches them also their rights." In turn the "awareness [...] of one's own rights leads to the acknowledgement of [...] the rights of fellow-citizens."²⁴ That is how, according to Radliński, individuals developed their moral concepts. Ethics—

Świętochowski wrote this long before—was the product of history, and since culture is also subject to progress, ethical concepts similarly perfect themselves in the course of time. In the ethical theories of the Warsaw progressivists, the concept of culture (a *novum* in comparison with the period of positivism) plays a very essential role. It is a guarantee and foundation of secular moral principles in an ethical system which rejects religious sanction.²⁵

The Galician democracy solved the problem of the relationship with the Church in a completely different way. Strongly opposed to political clericalism, the democrats took a very critical position towards the Galician bishops of Latin rite, whose activities destroyed in 1913 the attempt at a Diet reform and led to the dismissal of the governor Michał Bobrzyński. They also protested against other indications of the interference of the Church in politics, as well as against some activities of the papacy (such as the condemnation of modernism).

At the same time, however, they held back from any significant polemics with the Church; they always treated it with respect and took care to avoid the irony that was so frequent among the radical anticlericals in Russian Poland. Galician democrats, acting in a constitutional state, for a long time had been used to compromises and were less interested in the ideological problems. They concentrated on practical aims and saw no sense in a fundamental war with the Church.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, as before, progressive groups gave great weight to the educational problems: the controversies linked with the teaching of religion in school have already been mentioned. However, not this problem, but the question of national education was the main subject of educational debates among the Polish intelligentsia in the last decade before the First World War. During the nineteenth century, the elite (though perhaps not the masses) seem to have assimilated national feeling so thoroughly that the “loosening of the social corset” at the beginning of the new century resulted in a strengthening and not weakening of nationalism—as though the national ideals pushed into the minds over so many years had been waiting for the moment to appear in a form more radical than their creators imagined. Scouting, tourism, sport—all these forms of activity, so suitable to the mentality of the new century, were drawn into the service of these ideals. The Polish school is not national—everyone agreed with this, and paradoxically, the educational system in autonomous Galicia was criticized more strongly than the schools in Russian Poland. Confused deliberations abounded about the Polish national character and

the ways of adapting the curricula to it. In this endeavor the nationalists were at the forefront, but the liberals did not remain far behind, and people seemingly far from chauvinism could surprise the public with very nationalist statements.

The liberals' ability to adapt to new cultural trends had, however, its limitations. Had they completely accepted the new slogans, they would have dissolved into one of the modern mass movements, most into socialism, and some into the National Democratic party. Trying to avoid this fate, the liberals (their support for democracy notwithstanding) emphasized the necessity of respecting the elitist groups—above all “the progressive and democratic intelligentsia” which—as Kempner wrote—fought “on other bastions than the proletariat,” but this fight was just as real because “without an ideological basis a movement cannot exist [...] without a program there cannot be a fight.”²⁶ The socialists should understand and respect this separate position of the intelligentsia.

The liberals changed very much, they toned down their individualism, they strengthened their democratism, they condemned their *laissez-faire*-ism. Although with great difficulty, they even managed to modernize their party structure and to rejuvenate the style of their activities. Throughout the nineteenth century the liberals, similarly to the conservatives, formed loose informal groups, with editorial offices of various newspapers serving as centers of crystallization. In the beginning of the twentieth century Galician democracy—now with its center in Cracow—went through a gradual reorganization which resulted in acquiring the shape of a modern political party with formalized structures of dependence and local branches in the larger Galician towns. The Progressive Democracy in the Kingdom also organized itself as a modern political party.

There was one thing that the liberals were unable to do: to use the art and phraseology of modernist culture for their purposes. Whilst all other political directions adapted their rhetoric to the stylistic demands of the era, the liberals, in principle, retained their old language. As before, they preferred to clarify rather than call, explain rather than agitate. They appealed to emotions, but these were what they considered higher emotions: love, altruism and loyalty to one's convictions, as opposed to what they dismissed as passions, so willingly ennobled by the culture of modernism.

Maybe this was the cause of their defeat. The inability to transform into a mass party was probably not fatal; what was worse is that the liberals in all three partitions were no longer able to attract the intelligentsia. The most notable was the downfall of Poznań liberals; still in 1903 *Dziennik*

Poznański wrote: “we are a national and moderately liberal paper.”²⁷ Actually, it was slowly becoming a conservative newspaper striving to fight for an influence against the National Democracy.

In the remaining two partitions liberal groupings did not disappear. Most of the intelligentsia, however, became close either to socialism or to nationalism—whereas those, for whom both of these directions were too radical, supported the Polish irredentist movement which was launched in Galicia after 1905. The absence of a journal offering platform for theoretical debate on liberal thought, testifies to the decline of Polish liberalism. The small monthlies *Kultura Polska* and (from 1913) *Humanista Polski* published and mainly filled by Świętochowski could not fulfil this task. The liberals were left with the daily newspapers, above all the Cracow *Nowa Reforma* and the Warsaw *Nowa Gazeta*, lively and interestingly edited, but from their very nature not of much use as places of an exchange of ideals. Not only the emergence of a mass society, but simultaneously a loss of influence on the elite were decisive for the downfall of liberalism in Poland, as in the whole of Europe. At the beginning of the century, liberalism was becoming not only unpopular, but also intellectually unattractive.

If there was a field in which the liberals were to a degree successful in adapting their doctrine to the spirit of the times, it was the Jewish question. In 1905 they still considered that the fight for progress links Polish liberal groupings with the enlightened Jews. Orzeszkowa already a quarter of a century earlier saw in the Jews natural allies in the attempts at democratization of society; in 1909 Aleksander Świętochowski entitled one of his known essays *Zżydziały postęp* (The Judaized Progress). “If an institution is formed, which has as its aim the good of society [...], Jews immediately join it. It does not, however, have any links with Jewishness, on the contrary, it is even hostile to it since it attempts to erase racial and religious differences [...] joining all citizens in common work and a love for their country. If a magazine is formed, whose editors do not use the national flag as a handkerchief and do not make God into a journalistic reporter sending them inspirations [...], if this magazine defends freedom of thought, secular schools, emancipation of the people, non-party associations, etc., Jews subscribe to it and without them the magazine would hardly have survived. Yet it also has nothing to do with Jewishness [...] In a word, Jews always support ‘progress,’ which would stop without them,” because our intelligentsia, “in nine tenths clerical and pro-noble,” is not concerned with progressive ideals.

Undoubtedly, all this was meant by Świętochowski as a praise; it has,

however, a certain ambiguous sound. "What to do with the Jews and the progress they hired?"—asks the author at the threshold of his reflections. Progress is a matter of the whole nation, even if "slander" called it Jewish; if progress were really only Jewish, it would be "a death sentence for society."²⁸ It is clearly visible that Jews as allies are already a little troublesome for Polish liberals, especially when the National Democrats constantly called the Warsaw progressivists the Jewish party.

In the next years the attitude of the liberals towards the Jewish question rapidly evolved. Up till then they accepted assimilated Jews, whilst they were reluctant to the orthodox ones, considered to be an obstacle on the way to progress. National Democracy, on the contrary, treated the orthodox Jews with a certain tolerance, and it reserved the main hostility for assimilated Jews, treated as intruders only pretending Polish national identity. Now the attitude of the liberals came closer to that of the National Democrats: in principle still defending assimilation, they put the assimilated Jews on an even sharper trial, demanding from them an even more radical break from the Jewish masses and the declaration of absolute loyalty to the Polish nation. As one of the main reasons of this change of attitudes, the Polish liberals presented the development of the Zionist movement: it turned out now that a Jew "leaving the ghetto" does not have to accept Polishness, nor does he have to identify with any of the neighboring nations, but can proudly acknowledge his own, Jewish, national consciousness. From now on the acceptance of Western culture did not have to mean Polonization. In the eyes of the liberals it was treason.

The controversy was aggravated by the problem of the so called *litwaks* (Lithuanian Jews), newcomers from Russia to the Polish Kingdom. The anti-Semitic stereotype in its moderate version (and therefore perhaps easier to popularize) opposed the patriotism of "settled" Polish Jews to the hostility shown by the newcomers towards the Polish national cause; such voices were heard amongst others in the *Kultura Polska* edited by Świętochowski. It is not important that the number of Jewish newcomers from the Russian Empire was in reality comparatively small—the problem was turned into a myth and in this way influenced the non-Jewish population.

A decisive moment was the elections to the Duma in the autumn of 1912. The electoral laws based on the quote system gave rich Jews in the cities of the Kingdom an electoral power disproportionate to their number. The coalition of Polish parties in Warsaw put forward a common candidate, the well-known historian Jan Kucharczyński, who, in principle renouncing radical anti-Semitism, declared himself in support of the limita-

tion of the political rights of Jews in the municipal self-governments promised by St. Petersburg. National Democracy, pushing to a conflict, consciously made it impossible to put forward a moderate candidate who would be more easily acceptable to Jewish voters—such policy induced the latter to vote in the second round of elections for the left wing socialist candidate, a Polish worker, Eugeniusz Jagiełło. This, in turn, allowed the National Democrats to unleash an anti-Semitic campaign on a scale hitherto unknown in Poland. An atmosphere was created in which anti-Jewish attitude was almost a patriotic duty.

Świętochowski also succumbed to this atmosphere, acknowledging the voting for Jagiełło as an act of hostility towards the Polish nation—precisely how the National Democrats wished it. “Jewish nationalism [...] is impertinent, provocative, openly hostile”—he wrote in 1912. Declaring an attachment to the idea of assimilation and respect for Jews distinguished as Polish patriots, he asked: “Are these lights to blind us so much that we do not see the cloud heralding thunderbolts, which hangs over us and threatens us with extermination?”²⁹ Świętochowski—just as the nationalists—now directs his aggression against the assimilated Jews. “The so-called [...] Poles of the Mosaic faith were the true perpetrators of the election disaster [...] The withdrawal of assimilated Jews from the connections with Polish political parties was not only a tactical error, but was a sin with far-reaching results in the future. [...] For the first time the Jewish nation, equal in rights, has opposed the Polish nation. This is not a shapeless mass which we have to digest and to absorb, but our competitor, opponent and enemy.”

National consciousness—for the liberals as for the nationalists—becomes therefore exclusivist. One cannot be a Pole and a Jew (Ukrainian, German, etc.) simultaneously, but has to choose: you are either totally a Pole or not at all, and the Polish nation rejects “half-breeds, half-Jews, quarter-Jews, 9/10 Jews, who do not have the courage to be simply and totally Poles.”³⁰

The Society of Polish Culture directed by Świętochowski was included in the campaign. Established in October 1907, it was to advertise the new model of culture according to the ideal of the progressivists. Its organ from January 1908 was the monthly *Kultura Polska* edited by Świętochowski. On the 20 October, 1912 the meeting of the Society resolved that Jewish nationalism is the enemy of the Polish nation, that the assimilation of Jews stands for joining into the Polish nation unconditionally, that one of the most important tasks is the Polonization of Polish towns (i.e. weakening the position of the Jews in them), and finally—that membership in the Society

is open exclusively to Poles, without any difference in religion and ancestry.³¹

Such a mixture of the old liberal ideas with the modern anti-Semitic ones is described as “progressive anti-Semitism.” Its main representative in the Kingdom was Andrzej Niemojewski, and, besides him and Świętochowski, a big role was played by Iza Moszczeńska-Rzepecka.³² As late as in 1906, she published her work *Kwestia żydowska* (The Jewish Question) in the columns of the *Izraelita*, but her *Postęp na rozdrożu* (Progress at the Crossroads) in 1911 is already a classical manifesto of the new concept. The combination of anti-Semitism with progress, although surprising, is not completely unprecedented. The anti-Jewish attitude (as well as that opposed to any minority) could have been justified by tendencies towards integration, unification and centralization so strongly present in the ideas of the advocates of “progress.” Probably for the first time a complex argumentation of this type was presented in 1816 by Stanisław Staszic in the columns of the *Pamiętnik Warszawski*. “Progressive” anti-Jewish accents appear marginally in Józef Supiński, and more widely in Józef Rogosz and Teofil Merunowicz, both linked with the Galician democratic camp. We can see them also in the attitude of Jan Jeleński when he was writing his book *Żydzi, Niemcy i my* (Jews, Germans and Us). Whereas “ordinary” anti-Semites, generally accused the Jews of slandering traditional social, national and religious values, progressive anti-Semites (such as Moszczeńska-Rzepecka) did the opposite, seeing in the Jews a conservative mass opposing all changes.

The anti-Semitic–progressive blend could have been sometimes (as in Jeleński) just a stage in the development of individual views from liberalism to nationalism. It could also originate from the perfectly legitimate liberal tradition developing some of its threads. When it turned out that assimilation was not successful, the old program of integration was rebuilt in such a way as to leave Jews outside of the desired integrated society.

“Progressive anti-Semitism” is characterized not only by certain opinions but also by a way of expressing them. Its adherents’ criticism of the Jews is usually sharper than warranted by the tenets of the doctrine that often serves as an *ex post* justification for irrational bias. “Progressive anti-Semitism” broke with the principal idea of nineteenth-century Polish liberalism, namely with inclusiveness: aiming at blending all estates into one modern nation. Now part of the liberals came to the conclusion that this unity can be reached by excluding from the national community one of its strata. For some liberals this thought opened the way to a modern ideologi-

cal nationalism. Once the Jews have been definitely acknowledged as an alien group, not as one of the strata of the Polish nation, the Jewish problem in the general opinion becomes part of the nationality question, while until now it was considered rather a component of the social question.

The national problem was not of course limited to the Jewish matters. What did the Galician democrats and the liberals from the Kingdom actually think about independent Poland, what was their attitude to adjoining nations and to the ideal of a nation state? The times of which we speak is an era of unusual patriotic and nationalist exaltation, visible in the fine arts, literature and journalism. The ideal of a nation state could be attractive for the progressives because it could be considered to favor the liberation of oppressed nations; above all it suited well the radical attempt at the clear and rational organization of the world. On the other hand most of the liberals would agree with Bolesław Prus, that while "a new trend of the rapid development of great states, of true social giants grows increasingly stronger," at the same time a second trend of "the defense of their own individuality by smaller social groups" also gains grounds.³³

We could theoretically infer from this the inevitability of a future clash of the ideals of centralization with the rights of nations; but in practice the progressives in the Kingdom as well as the Galician democrats accepted the political reality in which they lived and planned their reforms within the framework of the existing state borders. They also tried to reconcile somehow their practical approach with the unextinguished and not completely verbalized longing for an independent Poland. The liberals of the Kingdom lived in hope of the gradual unification of Europe, linked with the liberalization and decentralization of the Russian Empire, which would make the problem of political borders a marginal issue.³⁴ The Galician liberals never renounced the thought of the restoration of Poland united with Austria.

The pressure of nationalist ideas on liberal thought could be felt elsewhere, too. One could come to terms with the fact that states remained multinational organisms, and simultaneously believe that such states should divide into monoethnic regions—in the framework of the "Polish" part of the Russian Empire Poles should therefore be the ruling nation.

Such an attitude can be found in the politics of the National Democrats as well as other nationalist movements in East-Central Europe. The main enemy is not the ruling state, but neighbors inhabiting the same territory—Jewish, Ukrainian or German workers, peasants or craftsmen. It seems that it was easier for many nationalists to reconcile themselves with the lack of independence than with the existence of people of a different faith or na-

tionality on the neighboring street. Such was probably the case of the “progressive anti-Semites.” The liberals, not reconciled with progressive anti-Semitism and still preaching the idea of Jewish assimilation, took of a more tolerant position in the nationality question. The *Nowa Gazeta* often argued with the National Democrats, and during the elections of 1912 they presented Roman Dmowski as the most harmful figure of Polish politics. “Perhaps the era of nationalism is not yet over, but it acts only by inertia” Kempner wrote optimistically in 1912.³⁵ This group of liberals also believed that Polish national territory should be in principle monoethnic—but unlike anti-Semites, they counted Polonized Jews as belonging to the Polish nation.

Whilst the democrats from the Russian partition limited Polish aspirations to the Kingdom, Poznań region and West Galicia,³⁶ the Galicians did not have any doubts that their province comprises a geographical, historical and political unity. This, however, did not induce them to strive for the Polonization of Ukrainians and the marginalization of Jews. Unlike the National Democrats, they recognized, at least in theory, equal rights of Poles and Ukrainians in Galicia. They continued to preach the assimilation of Jews. The Galician democrats, under the clear influence of the Austrian ideas on equality of nationalities, did not emphasize an ideal of exclusive Polish national territory. Although nationalist accents can be perceived in their political practice and the equality of rights offered to the Ukrainians often reduced them to the status of a tolerated minority, the political theory of the Galician democrats proved relatively resistant both to the chauvinism of the National Democrats, and to the concept of a nation state.

Eliza Orzeszkowa and—for a long time—Bolesław Prus were among those who persevered in the old liberal outlook of the Warsaw positivists. Orzeszkowa, did not publish much at that time, but her last study *O nacjonalizmie żydowskim* (On Jewish Nationalism) must be noted here again. Not unlike Świętochowski, she was critical of Zionism, believing, however, that “when any group of people feel that they are [...] a nationality separate from others,” it is this “feeling” that is the decisive factor. She emphasized the increasingly old-fashioned idea that “there is no better interest for a nation or a state than justice and honesty.”³⁷ The text is unfinished and a final conclusion is lacking; nevertheless the whole way of arguing characterized by calm and good will both towards the Jewish and Polish inhabitants of the country, leaves no doubts that the author was not disloyal to her life-long ideals.

Bolesław Prus meanwhile wrote a lot. In his *Kroniki*, as before, local

Warsaw events were providing him with a pretext for a wider reflection on society and its organization; the sole difference is that, due to the changed political situation after 1905, Prus was able to include some openly political texts into his *Chronicles*.

Włodzimierz Czerkowski, a well-known economist and Christian social activist, wrote in 1909 that “Bolesław Prus belongs to those writers, thankfully rare, who, styling themselves as judges of society, are most severe to their own nation, and extremely indulgent to its enemies. There was not a single nationwide matter in the last years in which this once so popular Warsaw novelist did not go against the feelings and aims of his own society.”³⁸ Such an opinion testifies to the departure of the Polish elite from the ideals of positivists, since Prus in 1909 did not proclaim any views that were significantly different from those which he had proclaimed from the beginning of his journalistic career. He still believed in the possibility of compromise both in international controversies and in social problems. He believed in a better future, too: not in the stunning perspectives of the socialists and radicals, but in the slow, shaky endeavors towards solving all small everyday problems, which in the future could make the world a little better and a little nicer to live in. He remained an occidentalist. His sympathies were directed above all towards England, which always formed the ideal of the moderate trend of Polish liberalism (the more radical preferred France).

For a long time, Prus did not surrender to the pressure of the ever-greater radical nationalism. In the first decade of the twentieth century the Prussian politics in Greater Poland used increasingly sharper means (in 1908 the Prussian Diet passed an act making possible the obligatory dispossession of Polish landed gentry). It is no wonder then that Polish journalism dealing with the national problem embraced military phraseology with “struggle” as the key word. In spite of fueling this phraseology inadvertently with a title of his novel, *Placówka* (Outpost), Prus often protested against it: “Struggle is a fashionable expression nowadays. Citizens struggle with governments, workers with employers, children with their parents, women with men, pupils with their teachers and so on.” Generally, however, the “expression to struggle does not clarify, but rather obscure opinions.”

True to the old tradition of pre-nationalist patriotism, he carefully differentiated “governments” from “nations,” and he believed that only the former could be treated as enemies. This does not, of course, mean that he himself was not sometimes prone to nationalistic stereotypes; his statements on the Ukrainian problem in 1908 were marked with a clear tone of

paternalistic superiority which may have harmed the relationship between the two nations more than open hostility. It is worth noting, however, that this was shortly after the murder of the Galician governor Andrzej Potocki by a Ukrainian student, and that compared with the violence of contemporary press attacks, Prus tried, in spite of everything, to maintain moderation and to judge the nationality conflict in Galicia from the point of view of his "universal humanitarian principles."

In his views on religion, Prus also differs from the predominant progressive opinions of his time. Avoiding taking position on religious dogmas, he emphasized that religion satisfies a certain human spiritual need, it is therefore indispensable, and there is no reason to assume that it should disappear some day. He was irritated by the superficiality and primitivism of the anticlerical and atheist propaganda. He asked: "Is war with the Catholic church, especially in our political and social condition, really the most urgent matter for awakening free and independent thought in the nation? And would it not be a thousand times more useful to this "independence" to set up some laboratory or even—translate a good book in philosophy, nature or mathematics [...]" He had argued about this with Andrzej Niemojewski and the *Myśl niepodległa*.

After about 1910, however, the journalism of Prus displays a clear duality. On the one hand he was still convinced that "increasing the number of worldly and creative minds, of active energy, of noble feelings—this is the deepest and most essential progress." "Do not harm yourself or others. Be useful to yourself and to everything that surrounds you [...]; perfect yourself and contribute to the perfecting of society. This is a slogan which is not only Polish but encompassing all humanity, obliging Poles, Russians, Germans, Jews, country-dwellers and town-dwellers, workers and their patrons, governors and the governed." On the other hand the attitude of Prus in the Jewish question was undergoing a slow change. As late as in 1905 he still sympathetically analyzed the ideas both of Zionists and of supporters of assimilation. Five years later, however, he defended the progressive anti-Semites from criticism and warned against "terrible dangers" resulting from Jews taking "important positions" in Poland. Rather than in assimilation, he saw the solution in the dispersal of Jews around the world in "small communes [...]. Then they will not complain about persecution, and others about their fanaticism, ignorance and exploitation," because "wherever they are few, they are honest useful citizens."³⁹ These texts display less aggression and passion than those of Świętochowski or Niemojewski, still the anti-Semitic inclination is beyond doubt.

Liberalism may have attracted individuals avoiding active politics, especially intellectuals fascinated by the ideals of freedom more than by other ideologies. One of them was Jan Baudouin de Courtenay, a colleague of Świętochowski from his studies in Leipzig, later a professor of Russian universities. His attitude displays a certain analogy with the attitude of Włodzimierz Spasowicz: a Pole, who did not renounce his national identity while making a professional career in Russia, but believed in the possibility of Polish–Russian cooperation and considered it desirable to strive for equal rights for all nations of the northern empire. More radical than Spasowicz, he did not hesitate to criticize sharply clericalism and nationalism; he emphasized his irreligiosity and—perhaps with a certain exaggeration—a lack of any national allegiance. Even Świętochowski, far from his political views, admitted that he did it out of a deep conviction and a sense of duty. Consequently, as the liberals of the past, he proclaimed the primacy of universalist ideals over the national ones in the time of nationalisms.⁴⁰

He was as sharply opposed “to progressive anti-Semitism,” as “to the organized irreligion,” which he considered an attempt to control the consciences of individuals just like clericalism. At the end of 1912, when the Balkan war made some Poles hope for the return of the Polish question to the international agenda, Baudouin de Courtenay wrote to Wilhelm Feldman: “I agree with you completely that the affiliation of the Polish Kingdom to Russia brings great cultural and moral harm, and I would have nothing against if the country was joined to Austria, or maybe even to Germany. Unfortunately [...] for anything similar to happen, it is necessary first to shed a sea of blood and tears, to destroy whole areas of the country, destroy many towns and villages, kill hundreds of thousands of people, make millions of human creatures unhappy, and by the process of war itself cause long-lasting savagery. This is too high a price and I would never put my hand to it.”

“Long-lasting savagery”—these are probably the key words of this text. This is a quote from a letter two days earlier: “It would be incomparably better, instead of organizing [...] Polish paramilitary movements” and anticipating a “Russian–Austrian war, to occupy oneself with the sobering of Poles driven wild with hatred to the “Jews.” This would be a thankful task, a task essentially cultural, whilst training in military sport, even if only anti-Russian, increases the amount of savagery and an inclination to banditry.”⁴¹

Baudouin de Courtenay wrote about the perspectives of war in the same

vein as Prus and Świętochowski about the 1905 revolution. Fear of savagery was due neither to cowardice nor to an inclination to moralizing. It was a logical consequence of the liberal vision of human nature and of social development. Since the latter is the cumulation of multiple “ant-like” (as the positivists used to say) activities and organic works, then no benefits in great politics—say, gaining civil freedom—can balance the loss resulting from the demoralization of the individuals who engage in street fights or bombing attempts because the fate of progress in concrete localities depends precisely on them. The ideological motivation of violent acts does not—according to the liberals—prevent demoralization because the rank and file performers are not aware of this ideal, or, what is worse, it serves as a justification of banditry. The problems raised in the quoted letters remained unnoticed by irredentist publicists, who were so busy spreading patriotic enthusiasm that they did not notice the question of the price of freedom and moral dilemmas connected with its acquisition.

The First World War divided the Polish political elite into two main camps. Most of the progressive democrats from Warsaw, including Świętochowski supported the Russian solution of the Polish question, whereas the Galician democrats, similarly to the Galician conservatives, were advocates of the Austrian orientation. One from the editors of the *Nova Reforma*, Konstanty Srokowski, held the post of the secretary of the Main National Committee [Naczelny Komitet Narodowy—NKN], concentrating pro-Austrian groups. The Galician Democrats considered war a protection of European civilization and culture against the “barbarians” threatening from Russia, while the advocates of the Russian orientation emphasized the necessity of protection from the Teutonic barbarity.⁴² When the Provisional Government after the February revolution of 1917 recognized an independent Poland comprising Polish ethnic lands, Aleksander Lednicki stood at the head of the liquidating commission which was to liquidate the Russian government in the Kingdom. Although war is not a suitable time for theoretical discussion, yet the rapprochement of liberal and socialist thought visible already before 1914 was gaining a momentum leading to the almost complete relinquishing of liberal views. The course of the war favored such a way of thinking—especially from the perspective of the lands ruled by the Central Powers. Until the summer of 1918 it seemed that Germany was slowly, but systematically nearing victory: was not this a proof of the superiority of a centralized and militarized German war economy implementing the ideals of state socialism over all forms of free market economy?

The well-known book, *Mitteleuropa*, published in the spring of 1915 by the outstanding German politician and liberal thinker Friedrich Naumann was saturated with these ideals. Against the old, individualist capitalism of England and France, he presents a new socialized German capitalism. The etatization and centralization of the economic system enforced by the war will cause in the future a division of the world into several economic regions: such an assumption lies at the basis of his project for the Central European union. The work of Naumann aroused the interest of Polish politicians. The NKN published in 1915 a large volume entitled *Środkowo-europejski Związek Gospodarczy a Polska* [A Central European economic union and Poland]; the most important section was written by Zofia Daszyńska-Golińska and considered the benefits that Poland would gain through participating in such a union.⁴³

On the other side of the front Aleksander Lednicki wrote early in 1916 in the spirit of Naumann that the very existence of conflicting blocks already foretells a post-war decline of the sovereign states and formation of great supra-national organisms. War damages will make governments interfere more actively in the economic sphere in order to organize a post-war reconstruction. Analogies do not seem to be directly influenced by Naumann, rather they are the result of similar ways of thinking on both sides of the front line.

The liberals accepted the view of the socialists that war was unleashed by the ruthless competition of great capital. This interpretation perfectly suited the propaganda of the Central Powers, presenting England as “a nation of shopkeepers” and blaming it with causing a cataclysm. Such a view was accepted even by Konstanty Srokowski who was far from socialism. It was given an even more emphatic expression by a follower of Progressive Democracy and adherent of the anti-Russian orientation, Józef Wasecug. War, he claimed, accelerates historical processes, drawing masses of people into a spin of great events. These masses acquire political importance, which will result in the democratization of the political systems. In civilized countries, such as Germany and Austria–Hungary, it will occur in a peaceful manner, in barbaric countries such as Russia—through a bloody revolution (Wasecug wrote in German-occupied Warsaw).

“Socialism, extremely increased in strength during the war, is the vanguard of international democracy. The war irrevocably confirmed the basic proposals of socialism. [...] Anti-democratic elements weaken. The sources of reaction and of anti-progressive activities gradually dry out. [...] The spirit of the age dictates its laws [...]. These are the direct and grave results

of three years of war,”⁴⁴ wrote Wasecug in August 1917. For some liberals, such an acceptance of socialist ideals could become the only way of retaining the traditionally liberal historiosophical optimism.

The fall of the partitioning states—on which Polish strivings towards independence did not have much influence—erased the old political constellation, making the building of a new Polish state possible. The fears and hopes of Baudouin de Courtenay from 1912 materialized beyond his expectations. At the cost of great human losses and an enormous growth of “savagery,” the European system, set up in the Vienna Congress, fell as a result of a four years long world war.

The situation in independent Poland was not favorable for the liberals. Although the war did democratize the world in accordance with their predictions, at the same time, in spite of their hopes, it antagonized it even more. The idea of the community of peoples, or at least of the non-contradictory character of their interests, so fundamental for liberals, lay in ruins. Even the social democrats, internationally inclined as they were, gave priority to national solidarity over class struggle. People sympathizing with the left and with “progress” could find in the Russian Revolution ideals far more radical, cohesive and attractive than liberalism could ever have supplied. Even though, these ideals did not find many advocates in Poland, they still contributed to the radicalization of society. The fall of stable political systems deprived the liberals (as much as as the conservatives) of a foundation which could give a certain hope of survival even in the unfavorable atmosphere—unable to fight for votes, they faced political death now.

The very ideal of a parliamentary democracy did not come out of the war unscathed. By inertia, Poland copied the French Republican constitution but the internal conviction of the superiority of parliamentarism over other political systems was lacking. The retreat from democracy, which began a few years after the war, would not bypass Poland.

Liberalism no longer offered a cohesive vision of the contemporary world or a convincing and optimistic prospect of future changes. It could only warn showing the danger of collectivism in all forms. And indeed—inter-war liberalism, in Poland and world-wide, devoid of a wider influence on public opinion and generally considered an anachronic ideology, became the domain of individuals, skeptical thinkers and political theorists. Narrowing socially, it deepened intellectually. It rejected its left-wing evolution (that took place before the First World War)—the evolution, which could not give it victory over socialism—and began, as Hayek put it, work in

expressing old liberal ideals in a language understandable to modern man.⁴⁵ This intellectual task of European liberalism of the first half of the twentieth century was accomplished successfully and prepared the ground for its rebirth in the last decades of the century—a rebirth, whose permanence it is still difficult to foretell.

Notes

- 1 The thought of the Polish democrats in Galicia is discussed at length in my book *Inteligencja wobec wyzwań nowoczesności. Dylematy ideowe polskiej demokracji liberalnej w Galicji w latach 1889–1914* (Warsaw: Instytut Historii PAN, 1996) [with a detailed bibliography]. Thus it is perhaps justified to treat these problems in a more general way here. The significance of the entry of the masses into politics in Russian Poland is stressed by Robert E. Blobaum, *Revolucja. Russian Poland, 1904–1907* (Ithaca–London: Cornell University Press, 1995), 217. On the liberal thinkers of the Kingdom see Tadeusz Stegner, *Liberalowie Królestwa Polskiego, 1904–1915* (Gdańsk, 1990) as well as Barbara Petrozolin-Skowrońska, “Z dziejów liberalizmu polskiego. Partie liberalno-demokratyczne inteligencji w Królestwie polskim, 1905–1907,” *Dzieje Najnowsze*, 1971, no. 3, 3–35.
- 2 Aleksander Świętochowski, *Sila niedoceniona* [Underestimated force], *Nowa Gazeta*, 1906, no. 2, evening edition, 3; Świętochowski, *Liberum Veto*, 472–473.
- 3 St. A. K. [Kempner], “Nie zabijaj” [Thou shalt not kill], *Nowa Gazeta*, 1906, no. 8, evening edition, 1.
- 4 St. A. K. [Kempner], “Granice walki” [Limits of struggle], *Nowa Gazeta*, 1906 no. 2, evening edition, 3.
- 5 [A. Świętochowski], “Liberum Veto,” *Prawda*, reprinted in “Z prasy polskiej,” *Nowa Gazeta*, 1906, no. 18, morning edition, 1.
- 6 The Cadets are considered as staying outside of liberal thought by e.g. a Russian émigré historian Viktor Léontovich, *Histoire du libéralisme en Russie* (Paris: Fayard, 1986), 360–362.
- 7 Stanisław A. Kempner, *Zarysy ekonomii społecznej* [An Outline of Social Economics] (Warsaw, 1906), 2nd ed. 4, 52.
- 8 Jerzy Kurnatowski, *Radykalizm zachodnioeuropejski II* [Western European Radicalism, Part II], *Nowa Gazeta*, 1906, no. 10, morning edition, 1.
- 9 Kempner, *Zarysy*, 139.
- 10 Kempner, *Zarysy*, 161.
- 11 Kempner, *Zarysy*, 234.
- 12 Kempner, *Zarysy*, 234–5. See also Zofia Daszyńska-Golińska, “Kapitalizm bierny i czynny” [Passive and active capitalism], *Krytyka*, 1903, no. 2, 126–134.
- 13 Kempner, *Zarysy*, 243, 249, 251–252. See also Stegner, *Liberalowie*, 53–55.
- 14 Kempner, *Zarysy*, 310.
- 15 Anti-clerical attitudes of the liberals in Russian Poland is discussed at length by Stanisław Gajewski, *Izydor Kajetan Wyslouch (Antoni Szech), 1869–1937* (Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 1995), 127–138. See also Stegner, *Liberalowie*, 47–50.
- 16 Świętochowski, *Liberum Veto*, vol. II, 523.
- 17 Cf. Janina Żurawicka, *Twórczość naukowa Ignacego Radlińskiego* (Wrocław, 1975), 103, 110.

- 18 Aleksander Świętochowski, "Szech," *Prawda*, 1908, no. 42, reprinted in Świętochowski, *Liberum Veto*, vol. II, 504–507.
- 19 "Z prasy polskiej. Jeszcze encyklika" [From the Polish press. The encyclical once again], *Nowa Gazeta*, 1906, no. 16, morning edition, 1.
- 20 "Gra Watykanu" [Play of Vatican], *Kultura Polska*, 1912, no. 1, 1–2.
- 21 Stanisław A. Kempner, *Szereg uogólnień* [A number of generalisations] (Warsaw, 1912), 48.
- 22 Quoted after Gajewski, *Izydor Kajetan Wyslouch*, 133.
- 23 Antoni Miller, as quoted by Gajewski, *Izydor Kajetan Wyslouch*, 134.
- 24 Ignacy Radliński, *Katolicyzm, modernizm i myśl wolna* [Catholicism, Modernism and the Free Thought] (Warsaw, 1912), 3.
- 25 This is the function that the idea of "culture" seems to have in Świętochowski's journalism. See Barbara Petrozolin-Skowrońska, "Liberum veto A. Świętochowskiego wobec rewolucji 1905–1907," *Rocznik Historii Czasopiśmiennictwa Polskiego*, 1970, 2: 194–195. Among the intellectuals closer to socialism this idea seems to have played a somewhat different role—according to Andrzej Mencwel, it served as a justification for cultural relativism and, consequently, for sympathy with various cultural differences. See Mencwel, *Etos lewicy* (Warsaw: PIW, 1990), 358ff and passim.
- 26 St. A. Kempner, "Granice walki," *Nowa Gazeta*, 1906, no. 2, evening edition, 3–4.
- 27 Quoted after Karwowski, "Historia Dziennika Poznańskiego," in *Książka jubileuszowa Dziennika Poznańskiego*, 94.
- 28 Świętochowski, *Liberum Veto*, vol. II, 508–511.
- 29 Quoted after Maria Brykalska, *Aleksander Świętochowski* (Warsaw, 1987), vol. II, 196–197.
- 30 [A. Świętochowski] H. D., *O Żydach* [On Jews], *Kultura Polska*, 1912, No. 12, 7–8.
- 31 See Brykalska, *Aleksander Świętochowski*, vol. II, 198.
- 32 Cf. Theodore R. Weeks, "Polish 'Progressive Anti-Semitism'," *East European Jewish Affairs*, 1995, no. 25, 49–68. See also Frank Golczewski, *Pólnisch-jüdische Beziehungen 1881–1922* (Wiesbaden, 1991), 90–118.
- 33 Prus, *Kroniki*, vol. XV, 159.
- 34 Stegner, *Liberalowie*, 99–105. See also Petrozolin-Skowrońska, *Liberum Veto*, part I, 188–189.
- 35 Kempner, *Szereg uogólnień*, 32.
- 36 Stegner, *Liberalowie*, 105.
- 37 Eliza Orzeszkowa, *O Żydach i kwestii żydowskiej*, (Warsaw, 1913), 223.
- 38 Włodzimierz Czerkowski, *Z powodu poglądu Prusa na kwestię żydowską* [Considering Prus' opinions on the Jewish Question], *Przegląd Powszechny*, vol. CI, no. 303 (March 1909), suppl. to no. 303, 1.
- 39 Prus, *Kroniki*, vol. XIX, 308, 316, 166; vol. XX, 263–268, 304, 250, 275.
- 40 Aleksander Świętochowski, *Wspomnienia* [Memoirs], ed. S. Sandler (Wrocław, 1966), 46–48. See also the selection of journalistic essays in Jan Baudouin de Courtenay, *Dziela wybrane* [Selected works], vol. VI, (Warsaw, 1983), as well as the introductory essay to this volume by Janina Kulczycka-Saloni, "Jan Baudouin de Courtenay jako publicysta" [J. B. de C. as a journalist], in *Dziela wybrane*, 7–32.
- 41 Manuscript letter of Jan Baudouin de Courtenay to W. Feldman, dated Petersburg 14/27 December 1912, in the Ossolineum Library (Wrocław), Manuscript 12276/III (*listy różnych osób do W. Feldmana, A–B*), 219–220; letter of 12 December 1912, Ossolineum Library, Manuscript 12276/III, 216 (National Library in Warsaw, Microfilm No. 33376).
- 42 Cf. Konstanty Srokowski, *Na przełomie* [At a turning point] (Kraków, 1915) (journalism in the years of 1914–1915); Aleksander Lednicki, *Z lat wojny. Artykuły, listy,*

przemówienia 1915–1918, (Warsaw, 1921), 9–14 (“Przed jutrem” [On the eve of tomorrow], newspaper article from October 1915).

43 Cf. Józef Chlebowczyk, *Między dyktatem, realiami a prawem do samostanowienia* (Warsaw, 1988), 232–236; Janusz Pajewski, *Odbudowa państwa polskiego, 1914–1918* (Warsaw, 1978).

44 Józef Wasecug, *Doświadczenia wojny (lata okupacji)* [The war experiences. Years of occupation], (Warsaw, 1918), 289 (A newspaper article from 1917 titled “Wskrzeszone prawdy” [Resurrected truths]).

45 Friedrich A. Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976), 1.

CONCLUSION

Terms and Currents

This Conclusion comprises five general problems. First, I shall sum up the main controversies of Polish liberal thought in the nineteenth century. Next, in accordance with the promise of the introduction, I shall discuss the definition of liberalism with reference to nineteenth-century Poland. I shall consider a little more precisely the reasons for the crisis of liberalism at the beginning of the twentieth century and then I shall reflect over the supposed weakness of Polish liberalism as a current of thought. I shall close the whole with an attempt at a short summary of the role of Polish liberal thought in the period of partitions.

I

The conceptual network of Polish liberalism shows a surprising persistence from the time of the Enlightenment until the end of the nineteenth century. Throughout the period, the thought retained the same reference points and perception of allies and foes. The most prominent element of liberal self-definition is provided by the position they took in the age-old controversy between reason and passion. Reason can be opposed to various phenomena: to experience, to culture (understood as tradition), or to authority.¹ For the Polish liberals these problems constituted mere niceties within their combat against passion: nothing beside it can darken the mind so much as to make people depend on tradition or authority.

Still, there was nothing specifically liberal in this. The Catholics also wanted to subject passion to reason—here Father Nowodworski would agree with Herbert Spencer, differing only with respect to the definition of reason. For Catholics, in the old scholastic tradition, it was the way to God and as such, a natural ally of religion. According to the liberals, however, rea-

son did not need the help of religion in order to indicate the true interest of the individual; the understanding of this interest was sufficient to incline man to renounce immediate pleasures in favor of far-reaching and real, but still this-worldly advantages.

The conviction that reason is the best tool to get to know the world was common to liberals with Enlightenment-positivist roots as well as to those with Romantic background, although Libelt or Cieszkowski credited reason with a completely different meaning than Świętochowski. Believing in the victory of reason, the liberals saw education as the most efficient way to social change. It is education that shows how to use reason in everyday life, that blows away superstition and convinces that a rationally understood self-interest, not contradictory but identical with the general interest, is the most certain leverage of progress. Sometimes one could sense a certain hypocrisy in this elevation of education (when for example a gentry journalist during the 1831 uprising lectured in the perfect spirit of Enlightenment that a school for peasants is so important that the abolition of serfdom pales in comparison with it). Generally, however, the conviction about the beneficial role of education is sincere, as it comes from the very core of the doctrine. Bolesław Prus caused a storm when he tried to question the dogma according to which the development of education was tantamount to the decline of crime.

The attitude of the liberals towards the state, unlike their position in the “reason versus passions” debate, was by no means equivocal. The Polish liberals’ antipathy towards politics has its roots not only in the situation on the Polish lands but also in their professed doctrine (see chapter six). At the same time the liberals, while counting on free social processes rather than command and being afraid of the infringement of individual freedom by the state, were looking forward to the state’s assistance in the fight against backwardness. On Polish lands, however, a strong state was a foreign state, hostile or indifferent towards the national aspirations. In the backward regions of Europe hopes for benefits from the collaboration with the authorities were usually stronger than fears of possible abuse of state power. In this case, however, reluctance towards the partitioning powers cooled the liberals’ fervor for collaboration with the government. It was this reluctance, and not the care for individual liberties that was the main reason for the anti-etatism of many Polish liberals.

Granted, the liberals many times deplored the threats to civil liberties, e.g. in their descriptions of the czarist repression after the 1863 uprising,

published in the Poznań and Galician press, or in their outcry against the Prussian policy of Germanization in Warsaw newspapers. Such repression, however, are presented as motivated above all by ethnic hatred, while the governments that perpetrate it as alien, barbarian, and unbecoming for a civilized European states.

Texts closer to the classical liberal approach, in which criticism of the state power is not based on its nationally alien character but aims at the defense of individual freedom, can be found in the journalism of the early years of constitutional Polish Kingdom (especially from the circle of Bruno Kiciński) and in the liberal Galician press (especially in the *Nowa Reforma*). Even there, however, one can find no approval of the idea of a “cheap state,” since according to the dominant view, the government should strongly participate in the economic and educational activities and aim at solving social problems, such as the Jewish question.

In European liberal thought we can often encounter a view (distinctly expressed e.g. by Hayek) that political liberalism is inevitably connected with economic liberalism, it must therefore collapse wherever the state directs the economy. However correct this view may be, Polish liberals in the nineteenth century knew nothing about this correlation. In this sense—on the level of ideas, not of practical interdependence of social phenomena—no relationship between economic and political liberalism existed on Polish lands in the nineteenth century. To a certain degree, one can even speak of an inverse relationship, since the *laissez-faire* doctrine in Poland was, as a rule, an ideology of the nobility aiming at conserving the existing economic structure. This rule was not without exceptions. The writings of Fryderyk Skarbek, while belonging to the gentry *laissez-faire* tradition, exceed it due to his knowledge of economics as well as his endeavor to develop a theory of economic development. On the whole, however, *laissez-faire* views stood for the gentry’s domination in society and as such were subject to merciless criticism from liberals—e.g. in the economic works of Tadeusz Rutowski and Stanisław Szczepanowski in Galicia.

The interesting and little-known text of J. F. Kołosowski, a journalist and one of the Polish exiles in France after the 1831 uprising, shows a rare example of the *laissez-faire* doctrine treated as a tool of Poland’s modernization.² The author presents an interesting picture of economic backwardness as a system of mutually conditioned factors, which makes it impossible for the country to escape backwardness through individual endeavors; as long as the system exists, each individual acts most rationally retaining their old modes of economic behavior. Such an approach betrays a certain

similarity to the earlier works of Wawrzyniec Surowiecki and the later works of Stanisław Szczepanowski.

According to Kołosowski, state interventionism cannot help here: the proper way out should be sought in economic and political freedom which certainly will only be possible in the future, independent Poland. Freedom of movement, of property transfers (including land property), of employment will shake the petrified social structure and will force a new type of economic behavior, not on individuals, but on the whole of society.

This interesting vision of development as a result of economic freedom already contains the germs of the later departure of liberals from the *laissez-faire* utopia. The overthrow of feudal legal barriers alone was not enough to achieve what the author dreamed of—the estate society, hardened by a centuries' old tradition, continued to exist, albeit in a somewhat weakened form. Only a strong state could undertake its destruction and the creation of favorable conditions to overcome backwardness. Such a state would have a lot to do even if nobody demanded from it the nationalization of private companies and the running of the economy, but only that it should provide the necessary conditions for the development of private enterprises.

The 1820s and 1830s were the peak of the popularity of the *laissez-faire* ideals in Polish liberal thought. Soon afterwards the German influence of List and Roscher will come to light and so will the influence of French utopian socialism. The popularity of economic liberalism will grow for a short time among the Warsaw positivists of the 1870s, to be replaced, in turn, by even stronger etatist concepts flowing mostly from Germany, in tune with the development of European ideas. In this way, Polish liberalism was born on the basis of the cameralist etatism of the Duchy of Warsaw, and a hundred years later it fell into its deepest crisis in the atmosphere of etatism coupled with socialist undertones. Rare flashes of economic liberalism (which should be distinguished from the conservative doctrine of the gentry *laissez-faire*) are rather exceptional, which does not mean the weakness of Polish liberal thought. Both the liberals and some of the conservatives could in certain circumstances demand that the state take steps which, by today's standards, must be acknowledged as anti-democratic. On the level of ideology, however, there is a fundamental difference between them. While the conservatives saw in the state a power enforcing respect for social and religious norms, the liberals did the opposite: they believed that a strong state, destroying estate institutions that were born out of superstition, will strengthen, not weaken, the freedom of the individual.

Were the liberals seen—by themselves and others—as a moderate party or rather as one of the extreme groups? Bolesław Prus described in one of his columns a conversation with a certain lady:

“Which party do you support? [...] the progressive one?

Well... not exactly.

So, the conservatives?

Well... just a little bit, maybe.

Would it be the clerical party?

Oh! Just a little, hardly at all.

Then the freethinking party?

Yes... a little bit... a tiny bit...

So which then?

The conservative–progressive–clerical–freethinking–aristocratic–democratic party.”³

This funny quotation would suggest the image of the liberals as a party of the center—the Polish equivalent of the French *juste milieu*. Such an image, however, would be incorrect and the position of Prus was not typical. Throughout the whole of the nineteenth century the liberals considered themselves advocates of change and progress and were seen as such by most of their opponents. The radical criticism of liberalism as a half-measure and moderate trend had of course existed for a long time (e.g. in the journalism of the Great Emigration after 1831), but it gained more importance only in the late nineteenth century.

Fryderyk Skarbek asked in 1821 the editor of *Sybilla Nadwiślańska*, Franciszek Grzymała, why liberal magazines “seldom practice moderation which is such an essential feature of liberal principles.”⁴ Grzymała answered: “It is well known that moderation is placed between two extremes: on the one hand zealous enthusiasm [...] and sometimes madness; on the other indifference, infirm compliance, and sometimes meanness. [...] Experience has taught that the second extreme is more dangerous for moderation [...] A middle course is therefore necessary in moderation itself!”⁵

Most of the Polish liberals of the nineteenth century would agree with the opinion of Franciszek Grzymała. An ardent opponent of moderation and compromises (in any case in the field of thought and outlook) was Aleksander Świętochowski, for whom—he emphasized it many times—an unambiguous and fundamentalist “reactionary” was more worthy of respect than a liberal inclined to accept the existing order. Backwardness by default pushed even the advocates of moderate changes into a more radical position. The liberals did not consider themselves utopians, and yet they

kept trying to transform a goat into a sturgeon – to refer to the parable of Bolesław Prus quoted in the fifth chapter.

If this was the case, it is tempting to look closer into this declared radicalism of the liberals. The conservatives often wrote about the “slippery slope” leading from liberalism to socialism, communism and the break-up of society. (Ludwik Masłowski did this probably in the most serious way). The liberals, however, did not consider their opinions as a screen for extreme principles.

Here is an example: when in 1884 France introduced civil divorce, *Prawda* (almost certainly with the pen of Świętochowski) triumphally wrote: “No matter in which direction Europe turns, France almost always proceeds at its fore. Again it has taken over other Catholic nations, confirming the right of divorce. If there are obsolete and moribund forms of social life, then insolubility of marriage is undoubtedly such a fossil.” A characteristic reservation follows: “Remembering the wild impulses of human nature, we are not advocates of loose couples which can be dissolved by any whim, any drunken row. Let divorces be bestowed with the sternest rules, let the law allow them only in especially important circumstances, let there be some escape for people who are not able to live together, divided by a mountain of resentments and sadness. Let us provide an escape not for the reckless but for the unhappy, let us prevent the pressure growing within the bosom of society from explosion.” Finally the triumphal note returns: French divorce law “has ensured [...] a great triumph of civilization for the nation, a great feast of progress which, in spite of all the hindrances, will always rise and sooner or later prevail.”⁶

It would be difficult to find a clearer presentation of liberal views on the results of social change, on problems which are much more general than the question of divorce. The liberals do not want a sexual revolution; they do not want to undermine the family or morality, although the conservatives reproach them with it so keenly. They are convinced that a controlled change of any element of the social structure does not have to be—as it often seemed to the conservatives—a stone that moves an avalanche, but on the contrary, it gives an outlet to tensions which can threaten with an explosion, and in this way it contributes to the stabilization of society.

It can perhaps be asked, whether the conservatives, with all their one-sidedness and exaggeration, did not at times perceive the social processes more accurately than the liberals? The conservatives, of course, made a mistake, believing that their favorite vision of society is the only possibility, while its rejection means anarchy; the possibilities of the organization of

society were much more numerous than they were prone to believe. Nor were they correct in accusing the liberals of their activities inevitably leading to a rise of radicalism and a victory of “subversive” ideals. The point is that the conservatives, with their “organic” vision of society, seemed at times to perceive more clearly that the social development takes place on various levels and fields of life simultaneously, whilst for the liberals the “organic” change (this term is used differently in both systems of thought) means simply a gradual change. Paradoxically, the liberals overrated social stability, hoping that the changes they demanded would not weaken those elements of the social system they valued as much as the conservatives.

The liberals fairly well understood the economic and social costs of modernization and were prepared to pay the bill in the form of the collapse of the traditional ties, the mixing of estates and the disappearance of folk culture (whose values they usually did not understand). It was harder for them to realize the further cultural consequences: the inevitable changes in morality, the brutalization of political life as a result of mass politics, the victory of “passion” over “reason.” Here—it seems—some conservatives were better prophets. Overlooking these problems, the liberals were unable to engage in serious argument with the conservatives, but dismissed their fears with a shrug as a timid attempt at holding back progress. This is to be regretted: they had strong arguments for such a polemic. The conservatives, though skilful in their Cassandric visions, were unable to propose remedies, whilst the liberals could justifiably claim that the real danger coming from a civilizational underdevelopment needed an immediate cure, and modernization diminishing the areas of material poverty would bring more benefits than harm after all.

The conviction that the world could be improved a little, but not made completely perfect is strong in Prus’ *Kroniki*, but a more utopian attitude was probably more frequent. Liberals in general renounced utopia—even when painting the picture of the ideal inn by the *Przegląd Tygodniowy* (quoted in chapter five). They accused their enemies, above all the socialists, of utopianism. Sometimes, however, they appreciated the utopian attitudes as a motor of change (e.g. in some statements of Świętochowski). Undoubtedly, a certain dose of utopianism is present in Polish liberal thought, in its conviction about the possible attainment of the ideal, about the inevitability of progress and in the belief that the answer to the basic social problems is actually simple and only ignorance, superstition and vested interests of individuals or groups (“exclusivity”) prevented people from perceiving it.

What seems the nicest element of liberal utopia is the conviction—dogmatic and unjustified, but forming one of the foundations of the doctrine in Poland and worldwide—of a deeply rooted harmony of the individual and group interests. The belief in the “invisible hand,” derived from the deism of Enlightenment, was deeply imbedded in the liberal consciousness and forced the liberals to seek in any conflicting situations a compromise beneficial for both sides. Such an attitude to a certain degree was a self-fulfilling prophecy and truly could soften the conflicts.

This belief in harmony decided that the liberal thought, with all its utopianism, was relatively immune to the danger of slipping into an anti-liberal position; unlike other utopian projects (socialism, nationalism etc.) liberalism treated its utopia as a vague and distant goal rather than a strict blueprint. The danger was not altogether absent. The premises of such an evolution existed in the etatism of the East-Central European liberals that could lead in the direction both of socialism and of various streams of nationalism.

The connection of the national and liberal ideas in the nineteenth century had stronger grounds than the existence of a common enemy which until 1848 was the conservative absolutism. National ideas (taking the term “nationalism” in the English and not in the Polish sense) supplied liberalism in the backward countries with an indispensable ideological support in the fight against feudal “exclusivity” and remains of the estate system. In their modernizing endeavors, the liberals could thus make use of an idea that was emotionally much more powerful than abstract economic considerations. In this sense the national idea for a time comprised the integral and outright indispensable component of liberal thought.⁷

It was not until the last quarter of the nineteenth century that the situation began to change. Nationalism transforms into a separate ideology whose main feature is not so much the trend towards integration as its opposition, the exclusivity and endeavor to separate individual nations one from another. The difference is best visible in the Jewish question where liberal attempts at assimilation are opposed by the nationalist rejection of Jews as aliens. From this moment—but not earlier—nationalism became one of the principal enemies of liberalism, whilst those liberals who had not perceive these changes, in the early twentieth century came closer to the nationalist camp or even found themselves inside it. This coming together was favored by the fact that radical nationalism accepted a large part of old liberal phraseology, which now adapted a new meaning. The similarity,

however, was limited to words and formulae, it cannot, therefore, overshadow the principal differences of the two directions.

For liberals the function of the national idea was diametrically different than for the conservatives: it was to be the tool of modernization, not the storehouse of venerable tradition. For this reason, the question whether modernization can weaken or destroy Polish national identity, seldom appeared in liberal thought. Supiński was probably the only one who wholly consciously raised this issue—and he was never able to solve it convincingly. For the liberals the nation was a project which would become reality only when modernity sweeps away the remnants of the estate system: nation-building was the condition and at the same time the effect of modernization, and not its enemy.

Enlightenment witnessed the birth of the dilemma concerning the mutual relations of the individual and the community, constantly present, verbalized or not, in the Polish liberal thought. Three elements were present here: the individual, the nation and humanity, although generally the individual and humanity were, so to speak, “allied,” because the rights of the individual were derived from supranational principles of progress and freedom. Liberals, as a rule, denied conflict here; sometimes, however, they had doubts. Anyone who contemplated this problem (Supiński and much more superficially Karol Dunin) usually followed the trail of Stanisław Staszic and admitted priority to the collective. To a certain degree this was motivated by patriotism, but the main reason was the centralizing tendency, forming in various settings a permanent part of liberal thought. The liberals almost never justified their “communal” option with national interest because such a category does not have a right to exist in the intellectual system preaching the harmony of partial interests with the good of the whole. Instead, the liberals justified this option with “universal” rights, such as the requirements of progress.

The problem became more acute towards the end of the nineteenth century when national democrats (Popławski, Dmowski) accused the liberals of sacrificing the national interest in the name of “universal” abstraction (such as civil liberty or the solidarity of nations fighting for freedom). The liberals did not dare to answer clearly: yes, should there be a conflict, we will choose universal rather than national values. Instead they tried to show that the problem was incorrectly formulated, referring to their old axiom of harmony between an individual, a nation and mankind. In the early twentieth century the people who wrote in this way included Prus, Orzeszkowa, as well as the leader of the Galician democrats Tadeusz Ro-

manowicz in his polemics with one of the most important works of Polish nationalism, *Myśli nowoczesnego Polaka* [Thoughts of a Modern Pole] by Roman Dmowski.

Is then Polish liberalism collectivist liberalism? Is anything like this possible at all? Theoretical assumptions, both in methodology and in liberal sociology, were invariably individualist, but in solving specific problems most of the publicists tended to adopt a collectivist point of view.

Polish liberalism of the nineteenth century—as almost the whole European thought of the era—remained fixed to the idea of inevitable and beneficial progress. Those authors are probably right who—above all Karl Popper—emphasize the negative results of belief in objective progress, easily slipping into belief in “historical necessities” that provide reason for every possible crime. The opposite conviction (e.g. that of Robert Nisbet) according to which the ideal of progress brought infinitely more benefits than losses on the whole, seems questionable.⁸ And yet, was not this idea beneficial at times, just as a harbinger of hope? In the extremely unfavorable conditions of Russification, the Warsaw positivists would not have found so much fervor to fight, were they not animated by the conviction that they are the heralds of progress and it is their task to reveal to society what has to take place anyway by the force of objective historical laws. If they were to know that the future is not programmed but open, then the analysis of real chances and possibilities would surely frighten them and would not allow them to reach even the goal they were really able to achieve, namely the enlivening of public debate over the direction of social development. Utopian elements in liberal thought undeniably existed, but the liberal utopia was to become reality gradually and not at one stroke; it was rather an unattainable ideal than—as in the Jacobins or later the Bolsheviks—a program for immediate implementation.

Belief in progress greatly influenced the historical consciousness of the liberals. History equals moral progress. Eliza Orzeszkowa wrote *O wpływie nauki na rozwój miłosierdzia* [On the Influence of Learning on the Development of Charity, Lwow 1876], giving as example the evolution of the society's attitude towards the mentally ill caused by the development of medicine. Neither she, nor any other liberal of the nineteenth century, would have understood the hundred years younger theory interpreting the same phenomena as a sign of completely opposite process, namely the rise of social discipline and repression.

The liberal image of various eras in world history was essentially unambiguous. Enlightenment, Renaissance, rationalist and secular traditions

were marked as positive, whereas the Middle Ages and clericalism were described as “reactionary,” and the Jesuit order was especially unpopular. This vision had its nuances—the romantic liberals emphasized some elements, whereas Świętochowski emphasized other ones—there was, however, no fundamental controversy. Polish historical traditions since the times of Enlightenment were not controversial either. Late eighteenth-century reformers, the Great Emigration, and the Springtime of Nations—this “progressive” scheme is from time to time invoked even now. Such a tradition was more or less common to the liberals and the democrats: this scheme encompasses neither the Kalisz group, nor the “enlightened liberality,” whereas the organic work tradition of the Poznań region and of the Polish Kingdom before 1863 is barely visible. Instead, one can trace references to the traditions of the Great Emigration (e.g. in the Galician democrats), even though the emigré tradition “objectively” was more suitable to legitimize radical democracy and even socialism than liberalism. It is said that today’s Polish liberals do not have a tradition, but exactly the same can be said about the Polish liberals of the nineteenth century: the feeling of the lack of their own tradition belongs to the essential elements of the traditional self-consciousness of Polish liberals.

A true controversy concerned the evaluation of the old Commonwealth. This controversy (presented in the first chapter of this work) restarted with a new vigor after the 1863 uprising. The strongest critique of the national past came from the Cracow historical school which stressed—especially in the works of Michał Bobrzyński—the archaic character of the old Commonwealth’s political and social system. Bobrzyński, one of the most eminent representatives of Polish conservative thought, was a declared positivist in the methodology of his works. Although he never considered himself liberal, his work could serve for the liberals as a justification of their views on the necessity of modernization (Orzeszkowa was keen to quote him). Bobrzyński published his first studies in the positivist *Niwa*, whilst his access to the group of the Cracow conservatives was seen by some of his contemporaries (e.g. Wilhelm Feldman) as contradictory with his social and historical views and motivated only by political ambition. The Warsaw historical school (Tadeusz Korzon, Władysław Smoleński) emphasized—in opposition to the Cracow school—the importance of the political reforms of the Polish Enlightenment, proving that the Old Commonwealth was, after all, able to reform its political system.

Both schools, however, were equally critical of the gentry democracy. Meanwhile, the gentry traditions were recalled by an author not likely to be

credited with any sympathies for them: Aleksander Świętochowski. He entitled his column in *Prawda* *Liberum veto*, signing it *Posel Prawdy* (“Envoy of Truth”: *posel* means both “envoy” and “member of Parliament”). In the first column of the cycle he justified his choice of title by emphasizing that on the level of ideas—not of specific constitutional solutions—the principle of *liberum veto* did not deserve contempt, but is an important element contributed by Poland to the treasury of universal liberty. Stanisław Szczepanowski referred to another aspect of the noble tradition, seeing in the educational ideal of the citizen–nobleman a type closest to the ideal of the English gentleman, on whose image and likeness he wished to shape the Polish society.

At the moment when professional historiography abandoned the idealized picture of the old Commonwealth (not for long, as the early twentieth century was to show), part of the liberal journalism re-evaluated selected elements of the gentry political thought, but by no means the gentry way of life and social exclusivity. After all, Świętochowski himself belonged to the sharpest critics of this gentry way of life, one of the hateful survivors from the times of feudalism, and Szczepanowski passionately attacked the gentry distaste for economic activities. Liberals, as a rule, thought in categories of a whole “organic” nation, and if there was a group that they were inclined to consider an embodiment of liberal ideas, it was the middle estate, not the gentry.

Let us conclude: once upon a time, in the post-partition Poland, there was a current of social thought, whose proponents professed reason, progress and humanitarian ideals. Their enemy was the post-feudal caste structure of the society rather than the omnipotence of the state, whose help in their mission to modernize and industrialize the country they would gladly welcome. They were reluctant to overestimate politics, considering the changes of civilization most important and finding education the surest path to the completion of these changes. They spread the national ideal, believing it to be an important instrument in the formation of a modern capitalist society, but they adamantly opposed to the absolutization of their own nation and its interests. Though firm advocates of religious tolerance and secularization of social life, they hoped that the Catholic Church may become an invaluable ally in the efforts to modernize Polish society.

Why should not such people be called Polish liberals?

II

Thus we arrive at the problem of defining liberalism. It would be easy to hint at numerous definitions of liberalism that stress anti-etatism as one of their main building blocks. On the other hand, it has been often stressed that creation of a homogenous unitary state forms an indispensable condition of the successful implementation of the liberal program. Assuming it is true, however, one could still ask: were not the enlightened centralists of the early nineteenth century too absorbed by their state-building ideas to be considered liberals? And what is more: can the groupings which never stressed the defense of the political liberty of an individual as their primary task, be called liberal at all? Is not therefore the choice of heroes for this book a proof of excessive discretion on the side of the author?

The above question can be answered in various ways. Besides anti-etatism and striving towards individual liberty, one could hint at some other aspects of the liberal tradition that are more useful for dealing with the Polish case. Since I have attempted to do it through the whole book, I would like to draw attention to something else here. The very term “liberalism” (with its derivatives) has existed in the Polish political parlance since at least 1815. I have already quoted the proponents of the expansion of a modern state who describe their views as liberal. As late as in 1843 the *Biblioteka Warszawska* (Warsaw Library) wrote in an article about the rights of peasants in Galicia: “All these laws, the work of Emperor Joseph II, although imbued with the spirit of liberalism that perpetrates all decrees of that monarch, were written theoretically, without knowledge of the situation and needs of the country, and therefore they could not fulfil their goal and have upset the social balance of the country for a long time.”⁹

These words were written by a critic of enlightened absolutism, not by its enthusiast. If the link between Josephinism (centralism, etatism, etc.) and liberalism is seen both by supporters and enemies of these ideas, then the historian cannot oppose it with his own a priori construction. Instead of “teaching” his sources about the “real” nature of liberalism, he can only accept that in a certain period the concepts of liberalism and “etatism” were closely connected. The next step would be to trace the genesis of this entanglement by finding out the common elements within both ideological camps which made such a connection possible. A large part of chapter one was dedicated to this task. It is relatively unimportant whether the authors themselves understood the nature of the relationship between ideas that were seemingly so different. Mixing the concepts stemming from various

traditions could occur unreflectively; this does not free us from the task of establishing the character of that relation.

It is similar to other trends discussed in this book. If the Galician democrats, the Warsaw positivists or the Poznań activists of organic work subscribed to liberal views (though with reservations, often contrasting their own opinions with other forms of “false” liberalism), we are allowed to take these self-declarations seriously. This is all the more so since I am writing a synthetic history of one intellectual trend, not a series of separate monographs that should embrace every aspect of ideology of every political group. I do not attempt to suggest that all thinkers or groups mentioned in this book belonged exclusively and unreservedly to the liberal tradition. Whoever would like to write a history of Polish democracy would not be able to do so without discussing Kollataj, Kamiński or—more on account of their name than their ideas—the Galician liberal democrats. In the same way, the researcher of Polish conservatism would take into account the ideas of Prince Adam Czartoryski, Andrzej Zamoyski and his supporters, as well as those of August Cieszkowski, whilst the student of Polish Christian-social ideals would have to include Karol Libelt or the above mentioned Cieszkowski.

There is nothing wrong in this and we should not attempt to order the arena of the history of ideas in such a way as to ascribe each author to a single intellectual current at all cost. It seems that in a country such as Poland, being a receiver of foreign ideas rather than a producer of original ones, such a “fuzziness” of ideologies should be greater than in England, France or even Germany. This lack of clear demarcation of intellectual currents and their mutual osmosis should disperse the doubts concerning the proper criteria of selecting persons and groupings. The internal coherence of the presented image, as well as the continuous character of the analyzed evolution seemed to me much more important than fears of a too hasty inclusion of this or that person into the ranks of the liberals.

The argumentation for self-identification can be strengthened by taking a larger view including Poland’s neighboring nations such as Czechs, Hungarians, Austrian Germans, and probably also Germans from what we may now call proper Germany (although the analogy seems somewhat strained here). In the whole region we encounter ideas similar to those forming the subject of this book. The Vienna liberals of the second half of the nineteenth century, the Young Czechs, as well as the Hungarian and German liberals can be characterized more or less in the same way as the heroes of my book. They all appreciated the advantages of state centralization, pro-

claimed national ideals (although generally renouncing chauvinism), combined individualist and collectivist elements in their thought, and usually treated modernization as more important than individual freedom. Regardless of all this, both their contemporaries and later historians rarely had doubts about assigning them to a stream of political thought: they were generally considered liberals.¹⁰

It is, therefore, worthwhile to follow the historiographic practice of the neighboring countries and to discover Polish liberalism: strange and exceptional when compared with English liberalism, it becomes normal and familiar once we compare it with related formations of the same historical region. Besides, it can be added that from this perspective there is no need for the term “demoliberalism,” introduced by some historians to describe some trends, especially the Galician democracy.¹¹ The democrats fit perfectly into the Central and Eastern European model of liberalism and do not require a separate name.

It could, however, be asked whether we really are bound by the consciousness of our heroes. Is it impossible to write a history of, for example, political freedom as a practice, not as an idea? Cannot we analyze various instances of struggle for free trade, for representative institutions or for local government without dealing with ideals that guided this struggle or to which the protagonists of this struggle subscribed? Yes, we can. The effect, however, would be a completely different book, whose author would have to take the greatest care not to turn his work into a mere catalogue of various activities and institutions that by chance happened to share some external features without having any common idea to connect them.¹² Detailed research in the history of ideas often requires a different classification of even extremely similar political programs or journalistic statements if they are implicitly motivated by different world-views or value systems. An interpretation that stresses essential similarities or differences helps to understand the scrutinized phenomena better than a classification based on differences or analogies of practical political behavior.

To finish with justifying the composition and the underlying assumptions of this book, it is worth stressing that the story it presents is internally coherent (as it is possible to offer general characteristics of the whole material). Possibly the best argument against my selection of “candidates for liberals” would be the presentation of the history of nineteenth-century Polish thought based on other criteria that would obtain a more coherent vision of ideological evolution than the one that emerges from the pages of this book.

In the above pages I tried to justify the title and scope of my book without attempting to construct a register of features that allegedly should characterize liberal ideology. Were it necessary, however, to try to identify the most important issues typical of liberal thinking, I would probably submit three ideas that are worth considering: reason, individualism and modernization. Jerzy Szacki (whose book confirmed my conviction that no attempt at a clear definition of liberalism can succeed) mentioned certain forms of individualism, and more precisely, “the language of the rights of the individual” as typical of all trends of liberal tradition.¹³ This fits also most (if not all) heroes of my book.

Rationalism was analyzed earlier in this chapter. As regards modernization, the liberal attitude comprised the consciousness of the dramatic distance between Poland and the West and the understanding of the necessity to overcome backwardness mingled with fear that the task is impossible. All this made the Polish liberals write some of their most emotional and thought-provoking texts. Neither rationalism nor belief in modernization are exclusively liberal features. We can find both of them in Marxists and some radical democrats, whereas modernizing tendencies constituted an important part of ideas of moderate conservatives like Bobrzyński or Wielopolski, or even such a “practical” economic politician as Franciszek Ksawery Drucki-Lubecki, who hardly fits any trend of social or economic thought. The assumption that a modernizer equals liberal is tempting but unsubstantiated.

The above arguments notwithstanding, it is perfectly legitimate to consider modernizing tendencies as one of the main tenets of liberal thought. This, however, gives rise to another problem: if it were to be the sole criterion, we would have to exclude from our investigations a large part of the gentry liberalism which was not, as a rule, especially interested in the modernization of the economy. Andrzej Zamoyski’s circle, with their perennial debates about the peasant question, would certainly be retained, but most of the liberal gentry parliamentary opposition from 1815–1830 would probably have to go. Even the Kalisz Party themselves, so often treated as a paradigmatic nineteenth-century Polish liberal group, would not be beyond suspicion (with the exception of Alojzy Biernacki, an outspoken proponent of agricultural reforms); still, there are twofold reasons for including this group: first of all, their self-definition (more important than all “objective” characteristics of liberalism), and secondly, their good knowledge of contemporary Western liberal literature and, consequently, certain finesse of “classical” liberal argumentation. The distinction between gentry liberal-

ism and the traditional, conservative anti-absolutist resistance of the nobility is, however, far from sharp. A detailed examination of phraseology and concepts would be undoubtedly of much help here.

III

Let us return once again to the crisis of liberalism that preceded the outbreak of World War One. It was not caused by any new rational arguments that would undermine the liberal world-view. What happened was a gradual change in the mental atmosphere: rationalism went out of fashion and heroic virtues seemed again more important than “small virtues.” Some of the problems posed by the liberals ceased to be interesting while others started to be formulated in a totally different way. Nobody vanquished the liberals in a rational debate—they were well prepared to face such attempts. Instead, the new style of politics and of political thinking (politics in a new key, to use the well-known expression of Carl Schorske)¹⁴ simply caused the liberal way of understanding public life to look naïve and anachronistic.

From the post-1918 perspective, the collapse of Polish liberalism seemed complete. It was not so: liberalism in Poland and in the world proved more vital than most of its critics and many of its advocates supposed, although the decay of some of its elements proved to be permanent. New liberalism re-appeared as a serious consideration of problems connected with the growth of the open society. Thus far it was a reflective and at times polemical continuation of the nineteenth-century thought. In the second half of the twentieth century, some liberal ideas once again became part of the mental atmosphere, unconsciously absorbed by educated people in the West (as it was through most of the nineteenth century). Here, however, a significant change occurred.

After the modernist crisis, liberalism did not regain its deep conviction about the natural superiority of reason over passion. Popular imagination was conquered by the belief in the value of “self-fulfillment” and spontaneity; in spite of older traditions, these values became recognized as components of liberal individualism. Following the trail marked already by John Stuart Mill (*On liberty*, 1859), the liberals of the twentieth century often combatted the tyranny of public opinion and traditional morals more bravely than the tyranny of repressive governments. This change was not limited to the countries with established liberal institutions—a similar evolution, as we have seen, took place in Russian Poland in the early twentieth

century. In the interwar period we can trace similar attitudes among the intellectuals close to what was considered the most important Polish liberal periodical of that time—*Wiadomości Literackie*.

Twentieth-century liberalism was more prone to tolerate individual or group deviations from the accepted norms than the nineteenth-century variant. A “collectivist” element, formerly manifesting itself in centralist etatism and support of national ideas, was much weaker than it had been. In the twentieth century, the fight with the remnants of feudalism, with “exclusivity” of the estate society seemed won long before; the civil society flourished, and life styles became more and more uniform. It was possible to abandon centralizing politics and to defend the right to be different. Through the second half of the twentieth century, liberal etatism was characterized by acceptance of the welfare state rather than by support of administrative unification and equalization.

Liberalism thus reborn did not return to the idea of unlimited economic freedom. Although this idea continued to influence numerous economists, politicians and journalists, the general opinion accepted the welfare state as something obvious and natural (in the West of Europe as a reality, in the East as a postulate). The *fin de siècle* witnessed the collapse of yet another ideal of the liberals—the myth of the “middle estate.” When the lower middle classes became, not only in Poland, the mainstay of nationalist trends, people with liberal views ceased to preach the virtues of the third estate and started to scorn “petty-bourgeois” parochialism and hypocrisy. After 1989, Polish liberalism seemed to return to the old myth: many liberal publicists started to write enthusiastically about the new Polish “middle class” that allegedly was about to develop and form the social basis for liberal politics. Now, however, this belief seems to be on decline once again.

What seems to have returned in the last decades is the conviction that was said to be eternally disgraced in the first half of the twentieth century: the belief that individual interests are complementary rather than contradictory, and that a mutually profitable settlement is always possible.

This short outline of liberalism’s evolution demonstrates the importance of the turn-of-the-century crisis as a watershed in the history of liberal thought. Progressive Democracy (active in Russian Poland during and after the 1905 revolution) was the first grouping to provide a version of modern twentieth-century liberalism in the Polish lands, whereas Galician liberal democracy, active continuously since the 1860s, mixed new and old in its ideology. Looking once again into the main fields of interest of nineteenth-

century Polish liberalism (as presented earlier in this chapter) one cannot help concluding that Progressive Democracy does not quite fit the picture. It is quite probable that it would fit better into the context of interwar Polish liberal thought; if so, this would confirm the frequent view that the 1890s were a more important turning point in Polish intellectual and social history than the moment of regaining independence in 1918.

IV

Liberalism as a part of popular imagination is something different than liberalism professed by the intellectuals. This distinction is important in discussing the relative strength or weakness of Polish liberalism. Jerzy Jedlicki considered liberalism an “introduction to ideologies” rather than an ideology itself. In a similar vein, Hayek saw liberalism as a “framework” that marks the limits of the competence of the state and of individuals without influencing the content of these activities.

This book does not leave any doubt that the often-repeated opinion about the marginality of nineteenth-century Polish liberalism simply does not hold. Until the late nineteenth century it was an important intellectual trend and at times (after 1815, in the 1870s) it may have formed the most important trend in Polish intellectual life, not to be disregarded even by its opponents. At the same time, however, it never became an “introduction to ideologies,” although through a large part of the nineteenth century it strongly influenced people and groups that were far away from it. I do not see a contradiction here. The liberal influence on other currents of thought took the shape of certain concepts and images: the idea of progress (i.e. of inevitable and targeted change) was perhaps the most important among them, since every current accepted the necessity of destroying the estate distinctions and of passing from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft*. At the same time, this influence was much less successful in creating a climate of respect for opponents or an atmosphere favoring rational discussion of ideas and politics.

As it seems, liberalism, strong as an intellectual current, did not succeed in creating liberal political culture in Poland. When the great ideological crisis shook its fundamentals in the 1890s, it suddenly appeared how few liberal tenets and attitudes survived to form a part of new currents and ideologies. It is therefore legitimate to speak about the weakness of the liberal climate in Polish public life, as well as the weakness of Polish liberal

politics (which is natural given the lack of political freedom through most of the nineteenth century). This does not mean weakness, let alone marginality, of Polish liberal thought. A few words on the social basis of liberalism may not be out of place here. In 1977 a Polish historian of liberal thought considered the view of liberalism as a “political ideology of the bourgeoisie” as a truth “universally accepted” by all researchers.¹⁵ Fifteen years later an American historian described the same view as a misunderstanding that makes it difficult to grasp the history of liberal thought.¹⁶ The nature of the relationship between ideas and social structure is never simple. Were we, however, to look for a stratum especially predestined to be the standard-bearer of liberal views, we would find—I believe—at least three candidates: besides the bourgeoisie (the “third estate”), there is the nobility and the intelligentsia. At least in the case of Poland, it was these latter two (and not the bourgeoisie) that formed the main pillars of liberal thought and politics. The view that the weakness of the urban third estate must imply the weakness of liberalism is, therefore, most certainly false.

V

From the perspective of several generations, is it possible to summarize the role of the Polish branch of a great European intellectual current without slipping into banality? The intellectual shortcomings of the nineteenth-century Polish liberal thought are visible at the first sight. The attempt to couple romantic philosophy with liberal social and political ideas, undertaken by Cieszkowski and Libelt, was probably the most interesting intellectual endeavor of the whole period. This may be considered a certain paradox, as the romantic philosophical tenets are usually considered inimical to liberal politics. Were we, however, to look at the late Enlightenment or Positivism, the weakness of their philosophical argumentation would become obvious. The liberals believed in the power of induction as if there had never been any Hume or Kant; in their social and philosophical analyzes, they made various heedless assumptions, used too wide and imprecise categories that resulted in imprecise language and in an inability to distinguish various phenomena. This could have helped their opponents in their attacks, had a rational debate on liberalism ever taken place in Poland; yet this was not the case, and the crisis of liberalism, as we saw, had other sources.

In spite of all that, nineteenth-century Polish liberals are still worth

reading. We know more than they did about the conditions of economic development, about problems of modernization and the dangers threatening modern civilization. At the same time, if readers of today put aside their ungrounded (if natural) feeling of superiority, they would notice people with an essentially modern way of thinking, who dealt with problems that were important and have remained unsolved until now. The effects of the intellectual effort to adapt the Western ideals to Polish conditions are very interesting even today, even though they are of no direct use for our times. I very much dislike a history of ideas that considers its heroes nothing more than links in a chain of historical events, and consequently interprets their thoughts only within the context of their epoch, as a function of the intellectual, social, political or economical situation of the period. A certain dose of such a historicism is indispensable for the interpretation of sources, but it can never suffice. A source can—and should—be subjected to an ahistorical interpretation, as a part of a timeless exchange of ideas, in which all the participants from antiquity to modern times are treated with equal attention.

Jacob Burckhardt, presenting the masterly panorama of Italian art, warns that one who expects the ancient Roman monuments to impress him with their beauty without any effort on his side will be disappointed. They have survived in an incomplete form, damaged and torn out of their proper context; therefore, a tourist must “develop the skill of restoring them in himself, without which the ancient scraps will seem to him evident chaos and their admiration—evident stupidity.” Looking at a fraction of an ancient structure, a modern spectator must reconstruct the impression, which was at one time produced by the whole building. To cultivate this skill in an art lover is the task of a historian.¹⁷

These interesting remarks fit the history of ideas as much as the history of art. If a historian attempts to place a text within the context of the epoch, his aim is not to alienate the text from the reader and reduce it to outlived problems, whose importance was limited to a given period. On the contrary, by providing the necessary knowledge of the epoch, he helps the reader understand the ideas, which are important regardless of the historical context.

If we remember this when reading the texts discussed in this book, we will easily notice that the old-fashioned vocabulary covers emotions, aims and convictions that are far from obsolete. One of the central tenets of Jerzy Szacki's book on modern Polish liberalism is that in the post-communist East-Central Europe liberalism has to be constructivist for the

first time in its history and that it appears there as a utopia.¹⁸ One cannot but agree with one reservation only: not for the first time, but for the second. East-Central European liberalism, both before and “after Communism,” consciously attempted to transform society after the model of the capitalist West. Remembering the first attempt that took place in the nineteenth century may help us understand the second one that we witness today.

The history of liberalism in Central and Eastern Europe, including the Polish case, clearly shows the possibilities of its anti-liberal evolution. “Every young and heroic idea is at some moment embraced by a mean old bum pretending to be its sister, who intends to rob the world with it, when the former wants to save it”—wrote Świątochowski.¹⁹ The centralist etatism of the liberals, originally meant to eliminate the ruling estate system, could slowly and unnoticeably evolve into an aggressive nationalism. No exact boundary separating the two can be found: the liberals often presented views, evidently motivated by national bias, even when their general outlook remained completely liberal, with all proper references to progress, liberty and Enlightenment. No cynicism is to be suspected: what took place was rather an imperceptibly gradual mutation of ideas. Liberalism became, so to speak, washed away and in a certain moment the liberal categories were rejected as unnecessary, since the ideology of national egoism was better suited to justify the new views. Such a mechanism, I believe, can often recur throughout the history of ideas.

Anyone still in doubt about the importance of the liberal tradition in nineteenth-century Polish history should try to imagine how Poland would look without it. Without liberalism, nineteenth-century Poland would turn into its own caricature, with radical revolutionists on the one side and conservatives on the other. It would become a country in which the whole of intellectual life would be reduced to debates on whether to fight the Russians or the Germans or both and who was responsible for the defeat of the latest uprising.

And yet it was not so. Polish thought knew other problems besides meditating on defeats that haunt “our unhappy country” (as one of the characters in Bolesław Prus’ novel *The Doll* said). I am not the first to notice that the proportions in Polish research in the history of ideas are continually being shifted. I would very much like this work to contribute to a change in the vision of Poland’s past: the Polish debates on the direction of economic and social changes, the activities of all supporters of “organic” and evolutionary progress deserve our remembrance. This shift may, perhaps, result

in the realization that Polish thought was much closer to the West than it is sometimes supposed. At the same time, an important element of Polish intellectual tradition will be saved from oblivion.

Notes

- 1 Ernest Gellner, *Reason and Culture. The Historic Role of Rationality and Rationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 57ff and *passim*.
- 2 J. F. Kołosowski, "O stanie materialnym mieszkańców Polski" [On the material situation of the inhabitants of Poland], *Kronika Emigracji Polskiej*, 1838, 257–265, 273–285, 289–298.
- 3 Prus, *Kroniki*, vol. IX, 175.
- 4 F. S. [Skarbek—cryptonym solved in the volume's list of content], "Korespondencja do wydawcy Sybilli" [Correspondence with the editor of Sybilla], *Sybilla Nadwiślańska*, 1821, no. 1, 54.
- 5 Franciszek Grzymała, "Korespondencja," *Sybilla Nadwiślańska*, 1821, no. 2, 108–109.
- 6 "Prawo rozwodowe (we Francji)" [Divorce Law (in France)], *Prawda*, 1884, no. 24, 227–228.
- 7 My opinion differs from that of Jerzy Szacki, who interprets the connection of liberal and national ideas before 1848 as an effect of superficial similarities only, not of any deeper spiritual affinity. See Szacki, *Liberalism after Communism* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1995), 57. In my opinion, such affinity did, in fact, exist and constituted an important feature of nineteenth-century liberalism (and not only in Poland).
- 8 Robert Nisbet, *History of the Idea of Progress* (New York: Basic Books, 1980), 8.
- 9 J. B., "O prawach włościan w Galicji" [On the rights of peasants in Galicia], *Biblioteka Warszawska*, October 1843, 120.
- 10 For a very introductory attempt at presenting some general features of nineteenth-century East-Central European liberalism, see my essay "Kozy i jesiotry. Uwagi o specyfice liberalizmu w Europie Środkowowschodniej między rewolucją francuską a I wojną światową," *Roczniki Dziejów Społecznych i Gospodarczych*, 1996–97, 69–92.
- 11 R. R. Ludwikowski, *Główne nurty polskiej myśli politycznej, 1815–1890* (Warsaw, 1982), 313–326; Włodzimierz Bernacki, *Jednostka, naród, niepodległość. Myśl polityczna demoliberalów galicyjskich, 1882–1905* (Cracow: Wydawnictwo Aureus, 1997).
- 12 It is to be regretted that such was the case of Treadgold, who investigates his subject from the point of view of political history only, in total separation from the history of ideas. See Donald W. Treadgold, *Freedom. A History* (New York: New York University Press, 1990).
- 13 Szacki, *Liberalism after Communism*, 31.
- 14 Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna. Politics and Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1981), esp. Chapter III, "Politics in a new key."
- 15 Barbara Sobolewska, *Doktryna polityczna liberalizmu arystokratycznego we Francji w latach 1814–1848* (Cracow, 1977), 13–14.
- 16 Alan S. Kahan, *Aristocratic Liberalism. The Social and Political Thought of Jacob Burckhardt, John Stuart Mill, and Alexis de Tocqueville* (Oxford–New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 146, 159.
- 17 Jacob Burckhardt, *Der Cicerone. Eine Anleitung zum Genuss der Kunstwerke Italiens* (Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner Verlag, 1986), 14–15. Among the books devoted especially to the

problem of interpretation of sources in intellectual history, see especially Umberto Eco, "Overinterpreting Texts," in *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*. Umberto Eco with Richard Rorty, Jonathan Culler, Christine Brooke-Rosa (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 45–66; as well as Andrzej Waśkiewicz, *Interpretacja teorii politycznej* [Interpretation of a political theory], (Warsaw: Scholar, 1998).

18 Szacki, *Liberalism after Communism*, 210.

19 Aleksander Świętochowski, "Dwa widma" [Two spectres], in Świętochowski, *Pisma*, (Cracow–Warsaw, n. d, before 1890), vol. III, 126.

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